Thomas H. Dickinson

The Insurgent Theatre

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THE INSURGENT THEATRE

THOMAS H. DICKINSON

30695

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TO MY WIFE

PREFACE

In this book it has been my purpose to treat the recent events in the non-commercial theatre as these refer to organization and management. I have purposely made no attempt to deal with the literary aspects of plays written for and produced by the so-called "insurgent" theatres. This matter would raise a large and interesting set of questions, which are not, in my judgment, while the plays are in a condition of development, ripe for present treatment. Those who are interested in play lists will find repertories of the theatres represented in this book in the Appendix. I wish to express my gratitude to the directors of theatres and companies for the courtesy with which they have provided me with information. I am under particular obligation to Miss Helen Arthur, Mr. Sheldon Cheney, Mr. Charles Recht, and Mr. G. P. Baker for general material, and to Mr. John B. Andrews for information as to child-labour laws as they apply to the theatre.

Thomas H. Dickinson.

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THE INSURGENT THEATRE

I

THE OLD THEATRE AND THE NEW

A Chicago critic, writing of Dunsany's "The Gods of the Mountain," said that the seven beggars were seven little theatre "movements" and the mountain gods were an angry American public come to turn them all to stone. Those who venture on experiments into new forms of theatrical activity may expect a speedy judgment. Whether like that of the Chicago writer this judgment withers them root and branch or whether it warms them with a more sympathetic approval depends upon a great many things, some of them in the critic's mind, some in general circumstances, and a great many in the personality and equipment of the reformer.

In this book I am trying to give some form to events of a half dozen years in the American

theatre. These events are of great variety and present at first view a front of no great consistency. At the outset the only point of agreement is the implied conviction on the part of the workers that the things of the old theatre must be destroyed and a new theatre be built up in its stead. This general attitude toward the established theatre has led me to call the new efforts insurgent. Differing in purpose and method all are alike in that they seek to change present practice to other and presumably better forms.

When one speaks of the theatre he no longer refers only to play or actor or even production. The term now covers all the technical, professional, artistic and social connections of a great edifice of public amusement. The comprehensiveness of the institution itself is an index of the complexity of efforts of those who undertake to change it, and of the wide field one must cover in attempting to survey these efforts.

Nothing is more common than discontent with the state of the theatre. Did I have nothing more than this to show there would be no excuse for a further spilling of ink. It is the fact that the vague and rather uninformed discontent of a few years ago has turned into work of a more expert kind, and that this work is now showing

some signs of orderly progress, that gives these events such interests as they may possess.

When one is planning to make a study of a large and well-known field it is well if he lets be known the principles by which he has made his survey and the safeguards he has placed over his own judgment. For my part I admit that some considerations have been constantly in my mind. The first of these is that in referring to a changing order of procedure it is good manners and good sense to avoid an appearance of censure against the older order. I do not present the insurgent theatres as better theatres; I present them as different theatres.

Another consideration has to do with the temper in which judgments are made. Naturally one wishes to be fearless of judgment both in censure and praise. There must be no hailing of comets as fixed stars or of promising plays as the great American drama. In freeing oneself from the illusion of the mystery of the stage one must not surrender to the illusion of revolution. At the same time the first requirement of a free criticism is a catholicity of understanding. The variety and distribution of the materials in the theatre makes summary judgment difficult. To pass judgment on the work of a particular artist is quite

unjust, for not once in a hundred chances has that artist been truly in control of his materials. Moreover the governing factor of a theatrical enterprise is quite likely to keep itself hidden. Nothing is more footless than to render praise or blame to a complex of accidental forces that by one means or another have got themselves gathered together into a stage production. Criticism in the theatre has become too much like judgment on a chapter of mischances. He who would draw conclusions can consider only motives and efforts. At the present time results lie outside the power of any man.

I have another working basis in my thinking about the activities of the insurgent theatre. It seems well to distinguish between the ostensible purpose, the "philosophy" which workers continually avow for their efforts and the driving power, the efficient cause which keeps them going. The two are not the same thing. And of the two the latter is the better. I am not even aware that the workers have been able to agree upon any set of principles. Their words are usually half-baked, over-reaching, pontifical, full-blown. The best service their words have done has been to cloak resolute deeds.

Chief of the statements they have made for their

work has been the so-called sociological argument. They have held that the theatre is ill-adjusted to the society that feeds it, that it is subversive of popular standards, that it does not cultivate the leisure hour, that it represents only certain groups of our citizenship, and leaves others unsatisfied. And they call for a theatre to serve a social end, to develop local spirit, to give voice to unspoken needs, to fill a gap in a line of institutions somewhere with the church, the school and the jail.

While some are making the social charges others are making professional charges against the theatre. They say that it is expensive in money and life, that it calls for much and gives little in return. They charge that it is banal, that it has no standards, or is continually debasing its standards, that to the artist its practice is precarious, and too often cruel, that it saps the springs of originality and creative effort from those who work within its walls. Now there is force in both of these arguments. The first has the warmth of a social cause. The second the impulse of revolt. And yet it would not seem that either one of these supplies the explanation of the theatrical activities of recent years. The true source lies in the active impulses of men. The logic of

events is better to be believed than the logic of words.

Taking it that there was an old theatre and that there is a struggle for a new theatre, what are the marks by which the two may be distinguished from each other? Are there any precise features of the old theatre for which the new theatre has undertaken to supply substitutes? Entirely aside from what artists say about the matter and judging solely from events, I think it may be said that a study of recent theatrical activities will show that there are such features and I am going to try to make a short arbitrary statement of what I think them to be.

The ideal of the new theatre may be distinguished from that of the old by their differing standards of support. Now support is quite indispensable in the theatre. Unlike the other arts, any one of which may be considered quite apart from its support, and simply as a matter of the artist's own creative impulse, the art of the theatre has no existence except as it is sustained from without. Support is not the reward or the recognition of the artist of the theatre; it is the prerequisite. It is the material with which he works. Without it he cannot work.

Now support is of two orders, clearly to be distinguished and yet mutually connected. The first is that mental support upon which the success of every play depends, the support of the minds of the audience. The second is the financial support upon which the machinery of the production depends. Both of these forms of support must be present or the play has no existence. If either one of these is withdrawn the play suffers. If either one is vitiated the artist suffers. A study of the condition of the stage during several years and the witness of the activities of the insurgent theatres, lead me to believe that in neither respect has support been healthy for some time past. I will develop this point under *Audience* and *Expense.*

Audience. The audience upon which any man of the theatre must depend for support of his productions is incoherent, inconsistent, and not as yet awakened to its power and responsibilities. Studying the potential audience of the American theatre we find that it falls roughly into the following classes:

Puritans. To these the theatre is still forbidden. Though they attend it they look upon it with suspicion. Even when they go they hold themselves rigidly and take no real pleasure in it.

This is a very large group and of all the most influential.

Theatre-Goers. To these the theatre is a pastime only, and all theatres are in one class whether legitimate, motion-picture or vaudeville theatre. Either their tastes have not been developed or, as is more likely, they check their taste at the cloakroom when they go to the theatre. This also is a large class.

Connoisseurs. By some these are called highbrows. They have become so critical and expert in their attitude toward a play as to be of little service in its support. This is a small but troublesome group.

Theatre-Lovers. These are to be distinguished from the theatre-goers because they have taste, and from the connoisseurs because they go to the theatre to enjoy it and not to judge it. This class, which is very small, is largely made up of foreigners, Germans, French, and Italians.

To these general classes, with their widely divergent attitudes the American theatre makes its appeal. Between the classes there is mutual suspicion, and within the classes there is inconsistency and insincerity. No effort has been made to specialize in the appeal to any one of the classes, or to arouse in any of them a sense of re-

sponsibility either to its own or better standards. The theatre has attempted as a rule to secure the largest number out of the total membership of the classes. Naturally it has appealed particularly to the largest class, to those to whom the theatre was a pastime, and a strenuous effort has been made by subterfuges and otherwise to satisfy the rigorous principles of the Puritan class. If any classes were to be offended or ignored the third and fourth classes were the ones.

Expense. The necessity of reaching these widely divergent groups has thrown upon the theatre the burden of great expense. It has projected the theatre into the domain of big business. No more could a theatre that appeals to all the people proceed upon a small plan than could a department store. And so the theatre has taken upon itself the expenses of a commercial purveyor of wares to a large and widely separated patronage.

In order to get a clear understanding of the problem of expense it may be appropriate to outline the chief factors of expense in a production.

Rent. In percentages rent runs from about one-third of the total income of a production in the smaller cities to one-half of its income in New York and Chicago. In dollars rent in the latter

cities is based upon a minimum weekly gross income of from $5,000 to $7,000. If the gross income is not as much as this the company is dispossessed. This means that upon the percentage basis every production must pay from $2,500 to $3,000 weekly rent in order to hold a theatre. These figures are borne out by the flat rental charged for the average New York theatre which amounts as a rule to $3,000 a week. The lowest annual rental for a bare theatre building in New York is $32,000, and this does not include helpers or heat or license. The highest annual rental runs well into five figures.

Business Getting. As each production appeals to the entire potential patronage of the city this item is a large one. Newspaper advertising is the largest single detail. With paper, sign boards and circulars it amounts to $1,000 a week.

Salaries. It is noticed that almost two-thirds of the weekly income is accounted for before any consideration can be given to the production. The next item of expense is salaries. This item can be set down as averaging $1,200 a week. The stage crew and musicians may amount to $125 more.

Royalty. The royalty on a new play runs

from five to ten percent on the gross, or a minimum of $300 a week on a play that can run.

Production. So far no attention has been given to the production itself, scenery, rehearsal halls, and manager's profits. Adding up the figures given we have $5,625 of weekly expenses before the production can be paid for. Of course no estimate can be made of the cost of a production but $3,500 would be a low limit of cost and the high limit may amount to as much as the manager is able to pay. And no consideration is given to license fees, $500 in New York and $1,000 in Chicago, for these ordinarily come in rent, nor to travelling expenses of companies on the road which are made up by shaving the metropolitan expenses of rent, advertising and salaries.

These Figures Interpreted. Without going too far into absolute figures, certain conclusions are forced upon one in studying the mechanics of the present-day theatre. If a production is to stay alive it must make $7,000 a week or more. Only to the extent that it makes more than this amount is it the source of any profit to its management. And it must make this not for one week, nor for ten, but for a season or a series of seasons if the great business edifice of the modern theatre is to be supported. Translating dollars

into audience the play must draw at least nine thousand people a week for an indefinite number of weeks. Manifestly no considerations of art or idealism will affect these primary necessities.

Under such circumstances no one can wonder that experiment in the theatre is difficult and dangerous. Anyone who wishes to produce plays in America, whether he belongs to the most strongly entrenched groups in the theatre or is the purest idealist who has come fresh from college alike faces these conditions. He faces an audience disorganized, suspicious, and partly insincere. He faces a high scale of expense built up in an effort to draw and hold that audience. Can one be surprised that under these conditions the zest of creative work in the theatre has been almost smothered? The theatre has in fact become a business, but a business based upon factors no one understands, upon which no one can depend, in the highest degree speculative. Nothing is more futile than to blame any man or set of men for these conditions. Before he does so let the critic declare what he would do under the circumstances. The answers of the experimenter have been illuminating. Either (1.) he has accepted the conditions and speculated, as does the established manager but without the latter's acumen; or (2.) he

appeals for support to a narrow audience and fails, swallowed up in expense; or (3.) he calls for a subsidy as a palliation of conditions; or (4.) he starts out to change altogether the principles of support upon which the theatre is run. Of them all the latter offers the only rational programme. But it is a long hard road.

More various than the minds of men have been the different purposes of those who have started out in revolt against the old theatre. Sometimes their purposes were confused between what they said and what they thought secretly in their hearts. Reduced to their lowest terms these have been their purposes:

To make money.
To serve society by giving good plays.
To serve society by giving plays cheaply.
To teach something.
To produce plays as artistically as possible.
Simply to do something in the theatre.

So has the confusion in the situation itself been worse confounded by the confusion in the minds of those who would correct it.

Quite appropriately the first signs of insurgency in the theatre came from within the ranks of the

profession, from those actors who felt the new business systems coming down around them and sought to escape their hampering control. The impulse that controlled this early insurgency was that most healthy impulse on the part of the artist to use his powers at their best valuation, continually to maintain a creative interest in his work, and to put forth his own vision of truth.

To this impulse we owe the continuing production on the stage of the plays of Shakespeare and the courageous efforts that have been made to introduce to America the best examples of the intellectual drama of the Continent. Neither one of these types was of an order to win the largest audiences. Both depended upon the insistent purpose of the artist to maintain on the stage plays that were fruitful to him as artist at whatever expense of labor or decreased returns. The classical play had so much of sanction on its side, it was so harmonious with the best traditions of the theatre, that it seems strange that it should be classed as insurgent. Yet such has been in fact the spirit of the long line of actors who for thirty years have held aloft the banner of Shakespeare.

It has required more daring to take up the cause of the modern European movement in drama. Without a large popular sanction, resting indeed

under suspicion and distrust, Ibsen and Shaw and Hauptmann have offered to the artists simply the opportunity to do as they pleased without any other compensation. Few indeed have come through these works to any larger power with American audiences. Many have been able to make success only by drawing upon the reserves of popularity stored up from other less way-breaking efforts. In this group Mrs. Fiske stands high. She has been a true insurgent within the profession. And so in varying degrees have been John Blair, Mary Shaw, and Arnold Daly, in their insistence on doing as they pleased and not boring themselves in a theatre that put a heavy price on such privileges.

While the established theatre of America was giving its anxious friends a hard nut to crack other theatres were prospering that were run on altogether a different system. Some of these were in the old world, but some, strange to say, were in America. Set away in side streets, making no appeal to the many, playing the classics of many languages and the newer pieces as well, these theatres were serving their audiences and giving joy to their workers. As a rule they belonged to those racial pockets which are so common in the cosmo-

politan life of great centers. The Irish, German, Yiddish, Bohemian, and French theatres were not perfect but they did show how other nations can support a vital dramatic art with critical understanding and financial support. The time was coming when they would serve as models for theatres dealing with the American substance of life. But before that time came great sums of money were to be spent in bolstering up a system that was doomed.

II

EXPERIMENTS IN SUBSIDY

When men first began to think of the problems of support in the theatre they thought of them only in terms of expense and ignored the factor of mental support. This was the time in which subsidy was looked upon as a cure-all for the ills of the theatre. The idea of a subsidy as a sum of money laid aside for the support or guarantee of a theatrical venture is one of the oldest and commonest of ideas in theatrical reform. The idea is derived from a misunderstanding of the practice and history of the state theatres of the Continent and is strengthened by the American's faith in the power of money to accomplish miracles.

Now I am of the opinion that the subsidy system of itself is not successful, that while it is useful in pointing the way it has never yet succeeded in reaching the goal. It has failed because it has depended upon the power of money to do what needed to be done by other means, because it is

palliative rather than fundamental in its efforts, because it has served to perpetuate a system that was subversive and expensive and because it has tried to impose upon theatre-goers under the guise of art and at the appeal of duty a kind of play they did not want and would not accept.

All of these go back to the first, that the subsidy system continues in the theatre the money impulse and the money control. So far from money being all powerful to solve the problems of the theatre it is safe to say that the dependence on money is the first guarantee of failure. In practice subsidy always goes on the theory that the ills of the theatre, ills largely derived from the false standards of values, can be cured by continuing those values. It may be true that the cure of the ills of democracy is more than democracy. But the cure of the ills of money is less money. The subsidy system in the theatre is inconsistent and palliative.

The classic example of the failure of the subsidy system in America is the New Theatre in New York, an example so full of lessons as to have been worth the money it cost. The incorporators undertook this project with an absolute faith in the power of money to do everything they bid. And they determined that there should be money enough. Kings of the business world themselves,

they could not conceive that there was any demesne that would fail to serve them. So they fell into a series of errors. The first was the idea that in building a building you are erecting an institution, that you can create a theatre as you create a sales organization. The New Theatre came into existence as a gilded frame for a picture that had not yet been painted by an artist who had not yet been born.

A fallacy allied to this is the idea that you can hold the artist to a schedule, that you can force the processes of the theatre to suit the terms of a contract. System has become very powerful in the theatre but it alone could not buy the services of playwrights, even the most mercenary; it could not create out of hand an audience; it could not force the completion of a building and the preparation of a play that the opening performance might be given on schedule time, nor overcome the handicap caused by a false and precipitate start; it could not adapt a great hall to the requirements of the contemporary play; it could not overcome the disadvantages of a scale of high prices and the tone of social exclusiveness placed about the theatre; it could not allay the suspicions of the experts in the theatre. Like the middleman in Frank Norris's novel who was smothered in the wheat he

had made his master, the New Theatre was engulfed in "business principles."

The New Theatre used its subsidy to perpetuate the faults of the commercial theatre. True, it introduced repertory, it eliminated stars, it produced new plays. But in so far as the American theatre is the victim of overfeeding it magnified the disease and offered no cure. It accepted all the faults of the commercial theatre, the high salaries, the tremendous property investments, and tried to cure them by superfluity. One purpose the New Theatre served well. It showed that no amount of money can accomplish what must come in the form of a change of impulse, that the stimulus of investment must give away to the stimulus of creation, that reform will not come from overplus but from reduction to the necessary factors. Much of the vogue of the simpler methods of production, the smaller and more modest principles of staging and popular appeal, followed immediately upon the failure of the New Theatre.

After this first expensive venture there was no further attempt to solve the problem of the theatre by erecting a building. Another and far better idea than this is the subsidizing of the idea, the providing of a fund of money for the support of

a series of productions. Two undertakings working upon this plan are found in Chicago.

For these two Chicago ventures two different forces are responsible. The first is the character and situation of the city itself. The second city of the country in size Chicago is theatrically only a provincial city. Few productions outside of the vaudeville field are made there. For its best theatrical fare the city is as much dependent upon New York as are Memphis and Madison. Now, there is in Chicago a strong creative spirit not only in business but in art and civic affairs as well. It is to be supposed that such a city would not long be content to leave unused its own inventive impulses in the theatre. The conditions that have made Chicago secondary in the field of the commercial theatre have made her a pioneer in the movement for a local theatre.

The first step for a new theatre in Chicago was taken in 1906 when a group of public spirited men and women organized the New Theatre of Chicago. Twenty trustees were elected and a guarantee fund of $25,000 was raised. Mr. Victor Mapes was called from the east to take charge of the undertaking. Of course it is easy enough after ten years to pick flaws in this early venture. The repertory gives a patch-work appearance; only one

American play of any value was produced, James A. Herne's "Margaret Fleming"; in foreign plays the committee was misled into offering a preponderance of the strong meat from European tables to the tender palates of the American middle-west; the audience was not successfully recruited; there were evidences of managerial vagueness of purpose; the venture broke up in a division of councils and a loss of the guarantee. All these difficulties could be shown without proving anything at all. Probably under no circumstances at all at this period could the theatre have been longer lived. Nothing daunted a few years later Chicago came forward with another plan. And as she had led New York both in time and in the character of her first, in her second she took a long stride ahead of anything that had been done.

The second Chicago venture goes back to the fact that Chicago had as one of her citizens one of the most dynamic figures in the modern movement of the stage. I will tell more of Donald Robertson when I come to discuss his early work in "Breaking a New Furrow." It is enough to say that this early work was Robertson's real contribution to the American stage, a contribution that is not as yet enough appreciated, for which perhaps the time has not yet come to speak in ade-

quate terms. This work had been done in and near Chicago and had planted the city with new seeds of growth.

Here comes a feature of the story somewhat pathetic and altogether significant. Robertson's efforts before had been artistic and scholarly. He had gathered about himself an unselfish company. He had introduced new plays and had started a circuit. As far as possible he had worked with an eye single to the true glories of the theatre, without impeding paraphernalia and without confusion of principles. He had paid a heavy price in money and strength. But he had been repaid in the artist's only coin, freedom for his own artistic impulses and growing solidity and expertness in his group.

And then came the ambition to do the big thing. I do not know whence it arose. Probably it was born in many minds at once, to those of civic vision in Chicago meaning an opportunity to establish a great institution, to the artist himself perhaps an opportunity to escape from the weariness of his self-appointed task. When such an ambition comes the first thing thought of is money; next to that the need of an edifice flanking the other respectable edifices of the city, with flat imperturbable façade, windows with blinds dis-

creetly drawn, and invisible but intimate sources of connection with centres of power in the Great City by the Sea.

This was in 1911; a fund was raised; committees were established. The organization was to be bi-cameral, the Chicago Theatre Society representing the city, the Drama Players being the expert and producing group and representing the profession. I haven't the heart to tell the whole story, and perhaps it isn't necessary. Again there came the medley of many purposes, the dividing of councils. As long as a man was searching his way on a shoe-string he had obligation only to his own and his company's dinner and to the word of command. But when there were a hundred subscribers his obligations were multiplied a hundred fold. Where does the point of conscience divide between the artist's instinctive imperatives and all those dictates that come so well recommended from the policies of "good business practice"? Certainly a large venture was compelled to do some things a smaller venture needed not to do. A big institution had obligations to the theatre as a whole that smaller institutions did not have. Professional actors were necessary. A road tour was considered desirable. The repertory had to be selected by an efficient system. An organiza-

tion that depended upon the largess of givers could not select plays as did Garrick and Macready and Frohman. Plays must be selected after the fashion used in locating a cigar store, by a referendum to experts and a counting of the passers-by.

The effort was high minded enough but it was doomed to failure. No power on earth could save it. The company accepted all the disadvantages of the commercial system with none of its advantages. Not only had it all the expense of professional companies but more. The actors and the management were all expensive. And the system of administration ignored by principle all the means by which a commercial company builds up its returns by a slow accretion of interest and a gradual expansion of profits over weeks and months.

The chief results can be given in a few words. By the aid of a committee a repertory was gathered together of which the individual numbers were good and the group bad. The repertory as a whole had a singular intensity and purposefulness, hardly relieved by the one or two pieces of historical (and therefore academic) comedy included. Though care was taken to encourage American playwrights no excellent native plays were secured.

Without exception the dramatists thought that what was expected of them was something "daring" and "strong" particularly in matters of sex. The company was like the repertory, excellent in members, quite without mass or group effectiveness. The whole thing lacked the genius of the leader to fuse elements into a whole. An inspiring leader through the wilderness Robertson lost his sceptre when he reached the temple. Above all the audience was lacking. People could not be lured to come. And the fact that some benevolent people had spent $60,000 did not serve at all beside the fact that men and women did not support the theatre with their minds.

The subsequent history of the Chicago Theatre Society can be told in a few words. Though they had learned an expensive lesson the leaders did not entirely despair of making money serviceable to the new drama. Robertson withdrew but those who were left turned their attention to the support of little companies that here and there were starting up with scant money but big enthusiasm. Men's minds go by contraries. It was not without reason that Winthrop Ames flew from the vasty deeps of the New Theatre to the petite spaces of his Little Theatre, or that the Chicago Theatre Society turned from their expensive

experiment in theatre reform to the poorly staged, frugal, but imaginative productions of the Irish Theatre. The Chicago people still had a little theatre, The Fine Arts, and they had some money. It must suddenly have come to them that there was one thing they did not have and had not encouraged, and that was the service of a band of artists. For two years the Chicago Theatre Society supported such artists as they could find, doing real service in bringing the Irish Players and Miss Horniman's company to this country. They ended their existence with another venture in the subsidizing of an imported English stock company, playing English plays under the direction of B. Iden Payne. This venture cost $15,000 and resulted in some good productions, and the first timid awakenings to life of a new audience. But imported plants do not grow in American soil.

The truth of this was shown in New York a few years later when in January, 1915, Emanuel Reicher established his Modern Stage. Reicher came to America with the prestige of a great name in Germany. He was equipped by association with both the Berlin Deutsches Theater and the Volkstheater. He had been admired by Ibsen. Early in the century he had directed John Blair and Mary Shaw in their performance of

"Ghosts." Moreover he had behind him a group of people to whom the theatre is not a mystery, who are in the habit of supporting it as a public institution, as they have done the Irving Place (New York) and the Pabst Theatre (Milwaukee) stock companies.

But all these things were extraneous to the real needs for the establishment of an American theatre. In the making of a repertory Reicher was conscious only of the principles followed on the Continent. From the start there was a flavor of class consciousness about the Modern Stage that Reicher himself may not have intended. Probably New York has seen no more distinguished productions than two of those presented by Reicher. But it remains that in serving "Elga" and "Rosmersholm," "When the Young Vine Blooms" and "The Weavers" he was providing alien fare. And when he joined himself with The People's Theatre and The Wage Earners' Theatre he completed his alienation from the American audience.

Many times throughout this book I will have occasion to call attention to the fact that the small American cities are to be considered by themselves in any view of the American theatre. A large

part of what is called the modern theatre movement is a product of the small towns. Their problem is both identical with that of the metropolis and distinct from it. They are dependent upon New York for their theatrical fare. But gradually their condition has been growing more desperate. Their productions have been taken away from them and cheaper ones have been substituted until to-day the motion picture and the cheap repertory company constitute their only entertainment in the theatre.

With them it is therefore not a case of improving theatrical fare to the point of the absolutely good. It is a question of providing for the town even the average fare that the city lives on, the popular successes, the ordinary good shows of the cities. One can imagine the town man saying, "Well enough for art, if you will only give us wholesome entertainment. We do not ask for Dunsany and Maeterlinck, but we would like to exchange our cheap movie, our travelling burlesque show, for 'It Pays to Advertise' or 'Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford.' "

For a question of this kind the answer has usually been sought in the local stock company. Under stress of a great many attacks the stock company has suffered a great deal of late. To-day

there are very few towns of below fifty thousand inhabitants that can support a stock company. These circumstances opened another avenue for experiment in the subsidizing of a theatre. It would be presumed that if subsidy is ever to succeed it must be here. But such experience as there has been only goes further to show how useless unaided financial support is when the mental support of the audience is not satisfactory.

Within the last five years three towns in New England have undertaken to support their local stock companies. The Portland Stock Company lasted twelve weeks; the Pittsfield Theatre lasted about a year; the Northampton Theatre has run through five seasons. The latter two are worthy of some attention.

In 1911 fifty citizens of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, a city of about 30,000 inhabitants, purchased the Colonial Theatre of that city with the hope of making it as creditable to the city as the library and museum. After conference with expert advisers the theatre was offered to William Parke on what seemed to be very advantageous terms. Parke was something more than the ordinary stock manager. He had had experience with the Castle Square Theatre in Boston. He was an artist, was interested in the best things, and a

genius in the economies of production. He gathered together a company of minimum size, from twelve to fourteen people, and paid them conservatively, based upon the fact that he was offering a full season's contract. By strict attention to details he reduced his expenses, including salaries, royalties, and rent, to below $1,500 a week. The company opened May 20, 1912, played through that summer and the following winter, and closed July 12, 1913. The plays produced included current Broadway successes, regular stock pieces, classic pieces including Shakespeare, and pieces from the new intellectual drama, in about equal ratio. Parke was supported by concessions in the price of the theatre and by organized support in attendance. At the end of a year he gave up the task several thousand dollars poorer.

In a venture of this kind there are always some features upon which no decision can be made. One of these has to do with the scale of prices. In a desire to serve the greatest number Parke set his prices at ten, twenty-five, and fifty cents. Whether he would have prospered better at higher prices is a bootless question. The other question pertains to the repertory. No one can tell that any other selection of plays would have been better received. It is very improbable.

Aside from these dubious points some things are clear. There was not in the city a coherent audience for any one of the classes of plays offered or for all combined. The audience was split by its demand to laugh, to cry, to think, as all audiences are. Moreover it was drawn here and there by other forms of entertainment, by visiting companies, motion picture shows and other stock companies. The conclusion is that either the already low expenses had to be reduced or the guarantee fund had so to be raised as to amount to an annual benefaction. The former of these things could not possibly be done under the commercial system of the theatre. Even if the latter had been possible it would not have been judicious to support by benefaction a thing the people had showed they did not want. The decision to close was inevitable.

A situation somewhat of the same type is presented by the so-called municipal theatre at Northampton, Massachusetts. In many respects this is one of the most extraordinary experiments of recent years, not, let me hasten to say, through anything that has been done as a "municipal" theatre, or in the production of a better art of the theatre, but solely as a contribution to the problem of the theatre in the small town.

Northampton is about two-thirds the size of Pittsfield and its population is a little more diversified through the fact that it is a manufacturing town and an educational center as well. In 1892 Mr. Edward H. R. Lyman gave to the town of Northampton a large and well equipped theatre called The Academy of Music to be held by the municipality and conducted for the welfare of its citizens. For twenty years nothing was done to put the spirit of this gift into effect. Then in 1912 a campaign was started, supporting committees were organized, experts were interrogated and as a result Miss Jessie Bonstelle and Mr. Bertram Harrison were engaged to form a stock company.

Both the directors were professional managers of broad experience and excellent judgment. What financial arrangements were made I do not know. The theatre was given under a certain concession and arrangements were made for a guarantee fund against loss. The principles kept in mind in making out the programme were that as far as possible the selection should be made to please the town. The theatre was to be a municipal theatre. No surrender was to be made to the desire to do the esoteric thing; on the other hand no plays of a debased order were to be considered.

In deference to the civic nature of the enterprise the prices were set at twenty-five, fifty, and seventy-five cents.

Considering the purposes a truly remarkable set of activities was placed in motion. The plays were of the general type represented by the Pittsfield list,—Broadway plays, stock plays, classical plays, and new intellectual drama. Both the first and second seasons drew upon the guarantees, $6000 and $2000 respectively. The players ended the third season $3000 to the good. The fourth season also was a success, with an average weekly attendance of 3681. Many times during the five seasons there had been crises but these had always been met by vigorous public appeals on the part of the directors. On the face of the returns it would seem that this theatre had been a success. But the end of the fifth season brought the withdrawal of the professional directors. The theatre still stands a question mark before the future.

Let me say once for all that no one could have done better than the management of the Northampton company has done. The plays have been good. The acting has been excellent. The company has been well supported by a courageous and intelligent committee. The trouble goes back to

the audience. The Northampton audience is not only split into the four divisions mentioned in my last chapter, but by racial and social subdivisions as well. The audience of school-girls from Smith College, by no means an uplift audience, the audience of the Puritans who are shown into their seats as into a pew, the audience of the French-Canadian workers from the mills coalesce with difficulty if at all. This is not only a local situation. It is the situation everywhere but Northampton provides a good text. There are enough people in Northampton to support a theatre if all would look one way. But they are not even all willing to sit together. It is said that the company was severely censured for playing such an immoral play as Besier's "Don!" No wonder Miss Bonstelle became discouraged.

Until you have an audience that faces one way no expensive machinery of the theatre can succeed except the one that appeals to the largest number. The thing to do is to start measures to face the audience as one, and until this is accomplished to reduce the expenses of experiment to the very lowest figures.

III

THE FEDERATED AUDIENCE

When I say that the subsidy system is a failure I naturally do not mean that the theatre can run without money or that there would be any case in which generous financial assistance would not be useful. I mean only that money is not the first and decisive need, that before money can be of any use at all there must be an audience that will support the theatre with its intelligence.

It did not take long to discover this need. Soon after the subsidy system had shown its weak spots measures were taken to organize the audience. It is a strange commentary on the persistency of ideas that the first efforts of the organized audiences were toward the support of the established institution of the theatre. Like subsidy, the federated audience was projected for palliation rather than cure.

A few years ago an enterprising writer on the theatre made connection between his subject and Tarde's theories of mob psychology. It was an

ingenious idea, more serviceable in adorning a discursive hour than in pointing a serious argument. And yet when the American audience began to take seriously its part in the "two hours' traffic of the stage" a real advance had been made. Until recently writers had been content to refer to anything other than the consumer when it came to pointing the errors of the stage. The player, the playwright, the producer, were all at fault. The law of supply and demand, so useful elsewhere, was not held to be in force in the theatre.

But there has been a change in all that. Partly as a result of new theories of social psychology, partly on account of lessons learned from the early experiments in a reformed stage it was seen that the audience had even a governing place in the fortunes of any theatrical undertaking.

Then came the movements for the enlistment of the consumer in the cause of a better drama, for his organization into a compact unit which could be wielded for a specific purpose. When one starts upon measures of reform the first instrument usually employed is prohibition. In the last few years there have been several measures for the expression of the power of the audience through organized prohibition. Perhaps the most vigorous effort of this type was that of the American

Federation of Catholic Societies, which in 1915 signed a manifesto against immoral and demoralizing plays. Aside from the fact that this kind of reform is merely repressive it fails of its stated purpose. For by selecting for particular attention certain productions these are given a notoriety that is very effective in getting business.

Far more rational than the scheme of *index expurgatorius* is that of collective support of plays that are considered worthy. This plan emphasizes the responsibility of the audience toward worthy undertakings, it compels their active discrimination as between good and bad plays, and it draws together those of like minds on matters of the art of the stage. One of the first movers in the federation of the audience for the positive support of good plays was the MacDowell Club of New York City, which has for some years scrutinized through committees the plays to be supported by its membership. It was soon followed by the Drama League of America, founded in Evanston, Illinois, in 1910, and immediately taking its place as the strongest movement toward the federation of the audience.

The idea of federation as practiced by the Drama League depended upon certain principles. In theory it was a positive idea and not negative,

constructive and not destructive. It went on the idea that the present organization of the theatre should be supported, that the real hope of the future lies in the fostering of the best agencies in the professional theatre. The Drama League has maintained this attitude always. It has been persistent in the support of the established theatre and has done little or nothing for those enterprises which have started up outside the theatre.

Now there are certain difficulties in the way of a proper administration of the federation of the audience for the support of good plays. One of these grows out of the fact that almost all plays are produced first in New York. The Drama League had its headquarters near Chicago, and the people it was particularly designed to reach were people of the smaller centres of the country. With them it was not a case of choice of plays. It was a case of take what they could get and be thankful. It is apparent that an organization founded to serve the nation as a whole could not have the immediate encouraging effect upon the fortunes of a play that an organization working alone in New York might have. For if a good play needs support it needs this in the first half dozen weeks of its career in New York. If it does not receive support then it will not live for

the smaller cities. The fact that it lives without organized support argues this a superfluity.

There are also some difficulties in the administration of the judgment as to the merits of plays. If this judgment is to be of any use it must be immediate and it must be expert. For these reasons there is nothing else to do but to delegate the selection to committees. Now the delegation of this responsibility is open to grave disadvantages. I am not willing to grant that any committee has the judgment to say what plays should be supported. If anyone were able to say what play is good and what play is bad the problem of the manager in the selection of plays would be forever solved. In fact no one can select. It is a part of the strength of the theatre that it lies so much in the question zones. By what tenets shall one decide what play to approve? By the tenets of things past? Then is experiment unduly handicapped. Or by the tenets of novelty? Then must all tradition and law be given up. It is clear that there are no absolute tenets for selection. The effort to select escapes being destructive and arbitrary only by being futile.

As there could not be an agreement on what constitutes a good play the attempts to agree only made the confusion worse. It provided false

standards where before there were none. Some thought a play should be well-made; others that it should be uplifting in tendency. Some would bar too great frankness in the treatment of problems but would admit just enough frankness. Few found any room for the way-breaking and renovating types. Then there was the difficulty that a play may be both good and bad at the same time. It may be good in construction as a play, bad in its morals and superb in its acting. Or it may be bad in its acting and unquestioned in its morals.

This point aside for a moment there are some other disadvantages. The most important of these is that by the Playgoing-Committee-Bulletin system the basis of discrimination was specialized in the hands of a few. From the many there was removed the necessity of inquiry as to the merits of a play. It is true the forms of the bulletins attempted to palliate this by giving the reasons for the choices but the fact remains that the process was taken from the many and given to the few. The real value of any judgment in art as well as morals lies in the power of discrimination. By the system followed this judgment was made in such a way as to make discrimination on the part of the many impossible.

In isolating and calling together the audience the Drama League did an excellent thing. It made the audience conscious of its power and of its responsibilities, and it started in motion a renovating stream of activity and discussion. But the Drama League accomplished more for the theatre in its study classes, lectures, discussions, and conventions than in all its bulletins for the reason that in the former it made the audience alert. It encouraged inquiry and discussion. To the extent that the Drama League limited itself to the problems of the audience it has done well. It has fastened responsibility where it belongs.

Like the Drama League the Drama Society of New York started out to support the best things in the established theatre. It began on the theory that the best things find their way to the stage in able productions. And so instead of trying to organize an artistic theatre it tried to organize an art-loving public. To this end it evolved a scheme somewhat more definite than that of the Drama League. Instead of bulletining a play and leaving it to the good will of the member to support the choice it organized a small and compact audience which engaged itself to support the best plays in New York City. Out of twelve

plays selected by the executive committee each member agreed to take tickets to ten. During the three years that this plan was followed, from 1913 to 1916, the attendance of the membership at plays ranged from five hundred to nine hundred.

Certain advantages are found in this plan. The first of these is that support was supplied very near the source. The second was that the organization had a real contract with the membership whereby attendance upon the selected plays could be guaranteed. And obviating some of the disadvantages of the delegation of choice, present here as well as in the plan of the Drama League, the Drama Society worked out a system by which the judgment of the play-going committee could be checked up with that of the members.

But with all of the advantages of the scheme the disadvantages were so many and the opportunities of more direct work were so pressing that in the fourth season of the Drama Society's work the system of federated support upon commercial productions was finally given up. It must have come to the minds of the directors that however far they went in supporting the established theatre they were but throwing pebbles in the sea.

Meanwhile other tasks were waiting to be done which the commercial theatre with all their assistance could not undertake. So in 1916 the directors decided to use the force of the federated audience for the attack upon some fundamental problems. These problems were of two types, (1.) the production and support of a Shakespearian play rendered under new and peculiarly artistic principles, by methods which drew upon scholarship and artistry and the best traditions of the professions, and (2.) the support of a plan by which good productions could be offered to those who desired them at a fee as low as ten cents. To this end efforts have been made to interest the Board of Education and to develop a People's Theatre. It is clear that in these two fields lie great opportunities for the federation of the audience. Much may come from an impulse derived from an audience wisely directed. Nothing will come from the mere impulse of money, as witness recent ten thousand dollar prizes, and the trips made by emissaries of the New Theatre to the homes of great dramatists, prizes and trips that led to nothing and worse than nothing.

A figure who has long been on the minds of writers on the American stage has been the unpro-

duced American playwright. He has floated before the vision of the organizers of the New Theatres of Chicago and New York, of the Chicago Theatre Society and of many another venture, but he had not yet revealed himself. Whether it was that the unproduced playwright was but a child of the imagination or was unproduced because he had not yet been warmed into life did not immediately appear. The fact is that we probably need waste no sympathy on the unproduced playwright. The true playwright will manage to get himself produced in one way or another.

Two New York organizations have been established for the particular purpose of encouraging this gentleman by supplying him with a small but generous minded audience. The New York Stage Society was established in 1912 on the model of the London Stage Society, an organization which had been uncommercial, innovating and sane and had used the force of an audience since 1899 for the support of some scores of good plays. Upon this model the New York Stage Society started in to support an American drama. There were among its membership 300 players, playwrights and members of the world of fashion. Fees were $20 a year.

At the beginning the Stage Society determined to produce absolutely good foreign plays and to keep watch for good plays by American playwrights. It had on its board many men and women from professional ranks and its associations were with the commercial theatre. Its plays have been done almost entirely under professional direction and in regular theatres. Scenery has been borrowed from Broadway managers. Little effect has been made to introduce new systems of production. With all respect for the high principles of the Society it is chiefly remembered for the mischances of its early sallies with the law in connection with Sunday performances. The Stage Society presented some distinguished plays, among them being Masefield's "The Tragedy of Nan," and Bennett's "The Honeymoon." In the search for American plays the Society was not successful, the only plays of distinction of native authorship being Patterson's "By-Products" and Torrence's "Granny Maumee."

The best work of the Stage Society was done in the two years of the presidency of Mrs. Emilie Hapgood. She vigorously pushed the work of the Society out of the narrowly professional scope that it had followed into broader and more fundamental fields. In the season of 1914-1915 steps

were taken for raising a fund for bringing to America Gordon Craig, Max Reinhardt and Granville Barker. Reinhardt was stopped by the blockade, the Society found it impossible to raise the $100,000 that Craig demanded, but Barker came. The sum of $30,000 was provided for him and there followed the Wallack Theatre venture in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife," and "Androcles and the Lion."

This engagement was noteworthy for another contribution that was made through Mrs. Hapgood as president of the Stage Society. In 1914 Mr. Sam Hume had been showing in Cambridge a set of model stages. Mrs. Hapgood heard of these and made arrangements to take them to New York. There followed the Exhibition of the Arts of the Theatre at 714 Fifth Avenue to which must be referred most of our knowledge of recent movements in stage decoration. Represented in this Exhibition were the first samples of the work of Mr. R. E. Jones. Since Mrs. Hapgood's resignation the best work of the Society has been done in support of the Provincetown Players.

Another society which attempted to use the power of the organized audience for the support of American plays was the National Federation

of Theatre Clubs, organized in 1912 out of clubs belonging to the New York City Federation of Women's Clubs. This federation under the presidency of Sydney Rosenfeld reached a membership of 1300 and had produced several plays without discovering anything worth while before it went to pieces of its own weight.

The organization of the audience represents a great advance toward a solution of the problems of the theatre. Beginning as a repressive thing it then became constructive and cooperative. It bent its first energies to the support of the established theatre. But the time was at hand when the audience was to find itself engaging in more interesting adventures still, making itself a working part of new movements for the complete reconstruction of the American theatre.

IV

BREAKING A NEW FURROW

We have only lately discovered that the theatre is not a place of mystery, that it is indeed a place that should be clearly understood by everyone. The time in which the theatre throve in the ignorance of its patrons was followed by the time when its only hope lay in the knowledge of its patrons. At first there was a little hesitancy on the part of managers to admit the people into the sacred precincts. They still tried to maintain the ancient puzzle values of their art, to convince the world that gold could be made from brass. It was under these circumstances that the world decided to write plays and the world's wife went on the stage.

Suddenly, to paraphrase Whistler, there was much talk "about it and about" and the theatre was abroad in the land. From the pursuit of social causes, of child labor, of alleys and garbage cans, men turned to the stage. From the problem of the full hour they turned to the problem of

the leisure hour, from the problems of work they turned to the problems of play. It was the Ruskin and Morris propaganda over again applied not to objects of utility but to objects of pleasure.

Like furniture, and wall paper, and town halls the theatre belongs to all the people. It is every man's province. It is the one art in which the criteria of the expert avail not at all if the ordinary man's "rule of thumb" is not satisfied. A generation ago Matthew Arnold had raised the cry, "Organize the theatre." He had been followed by Jones and Archer in England and an American choir took up the chorus, "The theatre must be saved for democracy." A scant five years ago the social significance of the drama was hailed as of moment to the state. Sociologists, social engineers, educators pounced upon it as a long neglected but useful instrument. That all this is a very recent growth is seen in the fact that up until 1914 such a periodical as *The Survey* had no room for references to the theatre. *The American City* did not begin to notice theatres until about 1915. A work which marked an epoch in the social interest in the theatre is "The Exploitation of Pleasure, a Study of the Commercial Recreations in New York City" by Michael M. Davis, published in 1911 by the

Sage Foundation. Leagues arose, and support and subscription societies; education swung into line, campaigns and propaganda ensued. We have told of some of the efforts to save the theatre by money and by referendum. Now come the efforts to save it by exhortation and revival.

And then begins the era of experiments. Placed as a rule in fields innocent of any association with the theatre, impelled by great aims, handicapped by the lack of tools and of expert knowledge, keyed only to more feverish activity by the magnitude and complexity of the task that faced them, blind to the enormity of their claims, these young organizations started out to break the furrow in untilled soil. Perhaps there is little to be said for many of these early efforts except that they undertook in the spirit of eagerness and youth tasks that only these spirits would venture upon. And in the general fanfare they did leave room in which the artist, no propagandist as a rule, could cultivate his gifts.

Early in the century the influence of the independent theatre movements of Europe began to filter into the United States. We too had had our Theatre of Arts and Letters as far back as 1892 but this had been too much committeed and had come to nothing. The experiments of

Antoine, of the German Freie Bühne, of the London Independent Theatre, meant little to America. But the Irish Theatre seized our imagination. Yeats's visit to America in 1903–4 had been a triumphal tour, and had been followed by a call for an American branch of the Irish Theatre. America began to apply the principles of this theatre to herself. Then in 1911 the Irish Players themselves came, covering the country in their tour, and spreading the ideal of naturalness and simplicity. The company came again the following year, playing during the two seasons in a repertory of a score of new Irish plays. After them the Horniman company came from Manchester in 1913. Organized on a different plan, far more expert, more connected with the tradition of the theatre, an organization of the town whereas the Irish Theatre had been an organization of the countryside, their influence was no less strong.

Meanwhile spontaneous movements had been starting up in America. They were of all kinds and they made all kinds of blunders. Beginning to show themselves about 1910 some disappeared immediately. Others more hardy or more adaptable still continue. Among the early efforts some stand out for particular attention on

account of the character of their antecedents or of their professions. In the nineties there had been established in the Hull House Settlement in Chicago a dramatic club. This had gone on for some years simply as an amateur organization. Then about 1907 it began to do work of a more serious and significant kind. Under the direction of Laura Dainty Pelham it began to produce plays of the new European movement. For this purpose it was well equipped. Its players were recruited from those races which are more at home in the theatre than are our people. The audiences too were alert and ready. The players had a theatre of their own. Soon they developed a command of the technic of the theatre. The spirit in which they did their work and the excellent plays they produced attracted attention to this group as the first "new" theatre company in America.

Naturally enough many of the early companies in the country were directly modelled after the free theatres of the Continent. It was not always recognized when men spoke of "free" theatres that there was no need to free the theatres in this country in the way in which they were doing this in Germany. While in Germany the freeing of the theatre may mean the placing of

it in the hands of the people, in this country the freeing of the theatres would rather mean removing it from the hands of the majority. This Julius Hopp, one of the first if not the first of agitators for a free theatre in America, did not recognize. As early as 1905 Hopp had organized in New York City a Progressive Stage Society for the presentation of radical plays. One cannot decide which was the stronger in Hopp, the passion for the theatre or the passion for social reform. We find him continually confusing the two, now using the theatre as a means of disseminating radical ideas, now organizing progressive societies for the support of new plays. Hopp belongs to the school of those who would impose on the theatre of America the systems of the Continent. After the organization of the Progressive Stage Society he busied himself in a series of subterranean measures for theatre reform, until in 1911 he comes forward again with a scheme for the solution of the problems of democracy and the stage. A great believer in the power of the people, the organization of human thunderbolts is Hopp's ideal of salvation. Just what cause the organization of the people would serve in the theatre he has not showed. In fact the theatre is dull with the people's dullness

and crass with their lack of vision. If there is anything in the world it needs it is to be freed from the control of the man on the street. If there is any call for a class contest in America in things of the theatre it is for a class contest in art in which the "good enough" of the average man goes down to defeat before the "best" of the artist.

But Hopp organized the Progressive Stage Society, the Wage Earners' Theatre, the Educational Theatre for Schools, the Theatre League, and he had a hand in Reicher's The Modern Stage, in each appealing to the people as to a great beleaguered mass to solidify their interest in support of radical plays. In none of these did he succeed and it is safe to say the class theatre will not succeed in America. And yet often though Hopp has failed he would be a rash judge who would say that Julius Hopp had not made his mark in the American theatre. Before anyone else he had seen that the present system of organization of the theatre is wrong and had started out to reconstruct that system.

Of another order and by some believed to be the most dynamic force applied to the creation of a new ideal in the American theatre is the career and work of Donald Robertson. Only incident-

ally a social worker, caring nothing for the implications of the theatre with other forms of life except as the needs of the theatre compel him to take his message to the people, Donald Robertson is an idealist and a poet in the theatre. I have spoken of him already in connection with his Drama Players of the Chicago Theatre Society. The true man stands behind the work of that organization in the work he did in preparing for it. He was reared in the best schools of English acting. Coming to America he served as support for some of the best American stars of the last generation. Then settling in Chicago he began to prepare the way for pioneer work in the theatre. His ideals have been truly reconstructive and truly scholarly. For inspiration he goes back without apology to Aristophanes and Plautus, to Molière and Shakespeare. And he holds rigorously to the ancient and honorable traditions of the stage.

In opening his programme Robertson undertook the herculean task of creating both players and audience. For the former he wanted men and women of flexibility and rich imagination and experience. For the latter he wanted an audience which could support what he offered in plays and playing. He began by creating a dramatic school. Here he gathered around him a group

of players who were soon fired with his own vision. Then in the summer of 1907 the time came for the next step. Robertson organized a repertory company and engaged the Ravinia Theatre, a theatre in an outlying summer park. There he produced five plays, Molière's "The Miser," Pailleron's "The Triumph of Youth," Ibsen's "Rosmersholm," Hauptmann's "The Coming of Peace," and Browning's "A Blot on the 'Scutcheon." This offering of plays, so stimulating and yet so substantial, won immediate approval from critics and audiences. As the summer passed there came a demand for a continuation of the work in a theatre in the city. With a little assistance Robertson took the Garrick for matinees, the Hull House Theatre for irregular night performances, and finally the theatre that was to house so many Chicago experiments, the Music Hall, later the Fine Arts Theatre and now The Playhouse.

I should be glad to dwell upon the achievements of this first year, lived through under fearful odds, a new play to be rehearsed every week, Robertson himself playing in many plays, making up deficits, working with committees, conducting rehearsals, blowing the fire of enthusiasm into tired followers. Seventeen plays were done this

first season and it was by all odds the best repertory that has been put forth by an American theatre. Between Chicago engagements Robertson and his company were travelling about the country, in Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin, putting into effect new ideas of support and of circuit.

In 1908 they opened again for a summer season at Ravinia Park, this time in Milton's "Comus." After a successful season more substantial financial support was secured and Robertson was invited by the Trustees of the Art Institute to appear in the theatre of this institution. This move was significant from two points of view. It was the first case in this country of the recognition of the drama as a sister art by an Art Institute. The association of drama, the poor drab of the arts, with her more pampered sisters has been in many respects fortunate for the theatre. But it was not the good fortune that was first manifest to the band under Donald Robertson. To them the confused situation of ticket-selling in such a sacred hall was a sordid but distressing fact. This season spelled the beginning of the breaking of the back of the enterprise. No one is qualified to speak for Robertson in this, but as an outside observer I should say that even his broad devoted shoulders were not strong enough

to bear the weight of the conditions that were laid upon him during the two following seasons. What were the conditions that bowed him down? The lack of a theatre; defections from his company; the lack of a settled company and so the impossibility of keeping plays in repertory; the attempt to produce too many new plays; a little strain of the academic and far-fetched in the choices for the second season; the lack, on the part of subscribers, of a comprehension of what was being undertaken, with some consequent alienation; some disastrous experiments with unsuccessful American plays; the lack of enough capital to tide over bad times.

The enterprise lasted three years and then began preparations for the larger and less successful venture of the Drama Players. During three years 32 plays had been given in Chicago and on tour, and one of the most strenuous efforts for a new American theatre had made a place for itself in history.

The early enterprises came to an end literally because the machinery was not ready to carry them. Theatres could not be had or they were too expensive. There were not enough people to supply understanding audiences. Actors had to be paid, they were inflexible in the handling of

the plays, and they were fickle. Worst of all the "idea" by which the machinery might be created had not yet gained currency. It was still considered vaporing and folly.

The serious importance of this lack of machinery must have become apparent to many people at the same time. Undoubtedly it was brought home to a great many by the experiences of Robertson. It was apparent that if such undertakings as this were to succeed the ground would have to be carefully prepared for them. If possible established institutions might be used as the units for providing this machinery. If necessary the machinery would have to be built, but however it was to be secured it must come and come speedily. This demand explains the formation at about the same time of several institutions that set themselves to the preparing of the minds of the audience, to the building of machinery for the critical dissemination of information on the theatre and of knowledge of the new movements.

Of these movements some took a local and intensive place but one became very early of national scope. I have already studied one aspect of the work of the Drama League of America. Outside of the bulletining of plays its work was so various that the term Drama League has be-

come synonymous with all the present activities in the new theatre. The Drama League has been the publicity committee of the whole movement, managing to keep the theatre always in the public eye and always on the public tongue. In this country we have become very fond of foundations, bureaus and boards of public service. The purpose of these may be executive, but it is quite likely to be investigative or merely conversational. They arise out of a desire to learn, to classify, and to discuss. The passion of knowledge, for its organization, cataloguing, and diffusion as small talk, is very characteristically American.

It was for some such function as this that the Drama League seems to have been established. It was a league of those interested in the theatre and concerned in its improvement. Not in the least a band of experts it has been admittedly a gathering of theatre-goers interested in the consideration of the theatre from the standpoint of consumers. This programme cannot be despised if it is followed consistently and is clearly understood. As long as the Drama League has continued an organization of talk, of the exchange and distribution of views, it has served its purpose excellently. When it tried to treat concrete

problems and provide specific solutions it was unsuccessful. Of the activities of the Drama League the following may be mentioned: the support of professional plays; the publication of plays; the encouragement of local responsibility toward the theatre; the distribution of information on matters of the theatre; the support of periodical publications on theatre matters. Of these the first two have been failures; the next two have been really successful. The last has been successful so far as it serves the purpose of discussion, unsuccessful so far as it presumes to represent authority.

An organization that undertook to develop in a local way a better understanding of the problems of the theatre was the Wisconsin Dramatic Society established in Wisconsin in 1910. Admittedly local in character and specific in aims the Wisconsin Dramatic Society continued its work for four years and ceased its endeavors when the preliminary work for which it was established had been sufficiently done. Its methods and principles may be developed in a few words. The Wisconsin Dramatic Society associated itself at the outset with an institution of education. While it was an independent organization with a membership drawn from all parts of the state it drew

force from the rather coherent social consciousness that surrounded the University of Wisconsin. The Society began with the purpose not only to attack some of the problems of the theatre, but to attack as well the conditions upon which the theatre is supported in the minds of the people. For this reason the educational work of the Society was stressed through the formal encouragement of the reading of printed plays and through the emphasis upon lectures on topics of the new theatre. In January, 1911 a company was established in Madison for the presentation of plays of merit "which for one reason or another are not available on the professional stage." The company in Madison was followed by a company in Milwaukee, and for some years these two companies presented plays in their respective cities, exchanged plays, and presented them in neighboring cities. During the last two years of the life of the Society, 1913–1915, some work was done in the fostering of a Wisconsin drama by the composition and the publication of plays, and by the publication of a magazine. The work which was carried on for four years by the devotion of a group of workers representing many of the activities of the state came to an end in 1915. The Wisconsin Workshop in Milwaukee is an

outgrowth of the Milwaukee department of this Society.

Emphasizing more the sociological features of the work of the theatre the Little Country Theatre of North Dakota Agricultural College at Fargo was established "to use the drama and all that goes with the drama as a sociological force in getting people together and acquainted with one another." At first view this purpose would seem to be aside from that of the theatre and to lie in the region of social economics. But this would be a narrow view. The work of the Little Country Theatre in preparing its three score of plays, many of them local and racial, has been a distinct contribution at the heart of the American theatre. There are many who will undertake the work of the theatre to one who will undertake that fundamental work upon which the new theatre must be built. A. G. Arvold has social vision, and his Little Country Theatre with its coffee-tower has come to be symbolic of what the theatre may mean when its uses are better understood. In the same state has been done the work of F. H. Koch in the University of the State at Grand Forks. Using the instrumentalities of the University as a nucleus Koch has done

much to develop an active spirit of coöperation in building up a provincial theatre.

Beginning in 1911 somewhat after the model of some of the older amateur societies the Plays and Players Club of Philadelphia has broadened its work in such a way as to keep abreast of the latest developments in the theatre. Its purpose is "to associate the amateur histrionic talent and playwrights of the community for the advancement and production of amateur theatricals and for literary and social intercourse." In pursuing these purposes it has become a very influential organization. The scope of its work is so broad, it is so thoroughly organized, its membership is so large, the number of its productions is so great that it serves as a stimulating example of what can be done by a city in behalf of its own cultivation in matters of the theatre.

It must be remembered that this is distinctly an accessory organization. It has no desire to establish theatres or to send out regular companies. It is a clearing house, a publicity board, a promoting committee for good drama. Partly explaining its success, it is an exclusive club. The Plays and Players Club has been in existence for six seasons. It has a club house of its own. It is man-

aged by a board of eight directors and has in its working membership some of the best known people of the city. It is a veritable play-factory, sometimes as many as three and four plays being rehearsed by different groups at one time in the club house. Sixty performances are given a year in centers throughout Philadelphia and in neighboring places. No old plays are given and a large percentage of the productions are the first on any stage. The power of such an organization as this cannot be overestimated.

What has been done in Wisconsin, in North Dakota, and in Philadelphia has been repeated in scores of centers all over the country. Admittedly work of this kind can never take rank with the solid artistic achievements of expert companies, nor with the way-breaking efforts of such men as Donald Robertson. But in their function, in plowing the ground for a later harvest, they serve a valuable if preliminary part.

V

THE LITTLE THEATRE

WHAT is the little theatre? I can imagine someone removed by but five years from a knowledge of American theatrical conditions asking this question with some perplexity. Perhaps part of the answer to the question may have been implied in what has gone before. We have seen the great need of the theatre in three respects, a better system of expense values; a more dependable and enlightened audience; an impulse coming from the artists rather than from the investors. The little theatre has represented an effort to supply these things.

There are some things the little theatre is not. It is not a repertory theatre, a municipal theatre, an endowed theatre, or an experimental theatre. All of these are respectable institutions which for their own sake and that of the little theatre, another respectable institution, should be kept in their proper places. It is not a repertory theatre

in that while it may use the repertory principle it is something more than a repertory theatre. It is not a municipal theatre though it may serve the purpose. It is not an endowed theatre for the reason that the best little theatres often work without funds. And it is not an experimental theatre any more than any venture starting to work in untried fields is experimental. The experimental theatre is a laboratory theatre for the testing of the tools of the theatre. We will treat it in a later chapter.

We may answer the question "What is a little theatre?" by reference to the activities of the last five years. Judging from these it may be said that the little theatre is four things. It is a building; it is a principle of economical management; it is a coöperative guild of artists of the theatre; and it is a system of alliance with the federated audience. Properly it is a combination of all of these things.

The little theatre is first of all a small building for plays given in an intimate way. It usually contains fewer than three hundred seats, the number in some places set by law as the figure upon which building requirements are stipulated. The Little Theatre, the Punch and Judy Theatre, the Princess Theatre, the Bandbox Theatre of

New York all seat approximately 300. The first Toy Theatre in Boston seated under 200. The Little Theatre in Chicago seated less than a hundred. The little theatre of the Vagabond Players of Baltimore seats 62. In theory these theatres are modelled after the Théâtre des Arts in Paris, the Kammerspiele in Berlin, the Little Theatre and the Kingsway Theatres in London.

Did the term little theatre refer only to seating capacity all small theatres without distinction would belong to the class. But little theatre means more than this. It is a building which is run in a particular way and for a particular purpose. It belongs to the class little theatre only to the extent that it satisfies these other conditions. The little theatre is run upon the theory of absolute economy of management. Someone has called it a "complete theatre reduced from average dimensions." This reduction extends to all the factors of the theatre, the size of the audience, the number of performances, the code of production, the size of plays, and the budget sheet. The little theatre depends upon the reduction of all the factors of a production to the lowest terms. Actors are not paid. Scenery is simple and made at home cheaply. Plays are not paid for and are given only as often as there is call for them.

These requirements sharply limit the little theatre. Immediately there disappear from the class such theatres as Ames's Little Theatre, the Punch and Judy Theatre, the Princess Theatre, the Bramhall Theatre, all of which are run on the business system of the professional theatre. And by a paradox there appear in the list some companies that play in larger theatres, such as the Washington Square Players who began as a little theatre company and though now playing in a larger theatre retain many little theatre attributes.

I come now to the consideration of the third means of identification of the little theatre. The little theatre is a guild of artists. What is meant by this? We have seen that the commercial theatre labors under certain disadvantages. Both on the side of the money features of the theatre and on the side of its artistic functions the commercial theatre is full of pitfalls and discouragements. And yet it is found that anyone who tries to improve either one of these features in the commercial theatre has his way blocked by the very forces which he is attempting to correct. The conclusion is that the only way to do it is to do it from without. The little theatre is a means of solving both these problems, the problems of

expense and the problems of art. It attacks them separately, but so closely do they hang together that their solution is mutual. The little theatre exchanges for the impulse to work which comes from the promise of reward the impulse that comes from the possibility of labor in pleasurable enterprises.

The importance of this principle as applied to the commercial theatre is not far to seek but it can only be adverted to here. Much as the commercial theatre depends upon artists it is found that a large part of the expense of a production is to be traced to the high money equivalent that has been attached to the art functions of a piece. The author, the actors, the director, the musicians, the scene painter have all learned to attach a high money value to service. And while the expense of a production has been rising the artist has lost much. He has lost for one thing personal association with his manager, which was the rule in the theatre until very recently. The greatest lament that went up after the death of Charles Frohman came from those actors who had lost a friend, the last New York manager to hold his artists by force of personality. The impulse of personal association in artistic work, the loss of which is so much to be deplored in the commercial

theatre, comes again in the little theatres under the spur of necessity.

The little theatre goes about to avoid both the high expense of the commercial theatre and its cold commercial contracts and it does this at one blow. It does it by identifying the two, reducing the expense of each item to its lowest terms by putting that item upon the artist to execute and expecting the artist to do it for the love of the work.

There remains the fourth characteristic of the little theatre. I have said it is a system of alliance with the audience. The little theatre depends upon the minimum support of an intelligent audience. At the start it does not need a large audience. It lays its pattern closely by the cloth before it is cut. It binds the audience to itself by subscriptions and guarantees. It identifies itself with the audience, sometimes even drawing its workers from among the audience. Not least among the achievements of the little theatres has been the fact that they have federated the audiences for particular purposes, that they have given solidity and direction to the interests of those who were anxious for a new dramatic fare.

How have they managed this last and most difficult feat? Simply through the spirit that

was in them, a spirit to which an audience could respond and which they were glad to support. The little theatre has been called "a place of entertainment for intelligent people." It has come to be this through the fact that artists have come to be the workers, through the fact that cheapness of production has demanded novelty in invention. While men work for joy and are not afraid of money loss they are sure to venture forth in new lines of creation which pique the interest. Because with all their faults the little theatres have done this their audiences have grown and solidified.

Naturally there are some real limitations to the efforts of the little theatres. They cannot get plays from great playwrights, they cannot hire experienced actors, they cannot use expensive sets. One grants all that may be said as to the acting in the little theatres. The amateur is not as expert as the professional; the new playwright not as sure of hand as the Broadway favorite. The best of the little theatres comes in their ability to make the most out of their materials and continually to strive to improve these materials. There are respects in which the amateur is in fact better than the professional. But the little theatre does not cling to him because he is an

amateur. It clings to him because he is the best that can be secured. And it makes something out of him because he brings freshness and zest to his work. But if the little theatre is so misguided as to raise class against class, to defend the amateur as against the professional, then it forgets the cardinal necessity of ever and always improving its work. The new playwright brings something to his task that is worthy of praise. He brings willingness to experiment, a readiness to break established conventions, sometimes a strain of unaccustomed poetry. But if the little theatre forgets the important thing and searches merely for the novel and the strange then it is failing in its task. The one-act play has been an excellent expedient for the little theatre. It has been easy to write and easy to produce. In introducing it the little theatre has rendered some service to the stage. But if it begins to offer the one-act play as the only form of stage art then too it is setting itself apart from the rational laws of growth.

The point is that the little theatres have been an expedient, filling an excellent place in a transition state of the theatre. They have provided the means by which all the necessary new factors of the theatre could come together in concert.

Artists, actors, painters, producers, organizers and audience have been brought together for the service of a new art for the theatre. Behind this the avowed purposes, the encouragement and support of an American drama, the giving voice and tongue to a neighborhood, the production of the great masterpieces of the world, the elevation of the taste of the community, the improvement of the canons of production and of acting, the creation of an audience, sink away into the oblivion that comes to professions under the records of deeds. The real forces that pressed the workers on were the urge to do the plays they felt impelled to produce, to do them by the codes their own artistic sense said was right, under methods of cooperation that fed rather than starved the spirit, and with the understanding support even if of a few.

There is perhaps some pleasant irony in the fact that the little theatre was the only type of insurgent enterprise that could possibly have succeeded in this day of big business in the theatre. It follows the wily instruction given in other activities. If you would escape the claws of circumstance do it "through minuteness, to wit." He is a bold man who attempts to meet the theatrical dangers face to face. Broadway knows the

names of some who have tried it. It knows the names of none who has succeeded. If you have a new word do not blow a loud blast thinking that thereby the walls of the city will fall. The places of power do not crumble at shouted words of prophecy. Rather seek out a niche in a side street, whisper your word to a chosen two or three, protect yourself by your lack of pretense. Then it may be that before long you too will have gathered to yourself power. It may even be that in due time emissaries will come from high places bearing gifts.

VI

THE THEATRE AND THE LAW

The way of the innovator is not always made easy for him. Many enthusiastic workers for new fashions in the theatre, spurred on by the unselfishness of their aims and the reasonableness of their cause, have supposed that all the institutions of society would work in harmony with them. They have been somewhat surprised and discouraged when they found themselves in early conflict with the law, and to some of them the difficulties were so strong as effectually to discourage further efforts.

One who surveys the history of the little experimental theatres of the last few years, noting their timid efforts to get a foothold in a busy and unsympathetic world, has been slightly amused to see how many of these have been hampered by official interference. He sees the commercial theatre going forward with no apparent attention from the law even while it is doing things that cannot be considered of the highest social

value. But licenses have been refused, new theatres have been closed, respectable managers have been arrested, the expenditures of thousands of dollars have been rendered valueless through the enforcement of seeming technicalities against ventures that in no way bulked large in the horizon of the law and as a rule were conducted by men and women of unquestioned high motives.

Does the law discriminate against the new theatres? Has there been conspiracy deep and dark against the benevolent reformers of things in the theatre? It might be well for the interest of this book if I could make out such a case. But I cannot do so. Aside from the fact that imagination is not the business of the law, a cold blooded thing usually based upon the maintenance of things as they were, I cannot find that there is any real difference between the law as enforced on the established theatre and on the new theatres. The established theatre is run by men who know the law. If they didn't they couldn't run a theatre long. The new theatre is too often run by people who know no more about the law than they do about the theatre. For the sake of these a short statement of the attitude of the law as it turns toward the theatre would seem to be appropriate.

From the earliest times the law has kept a peculiar hold on the theatre. It has to be remembered that the theatre has not been with us from the start. It broke its way into Anglo-Saxon society from places outside the city gate and it came in with the wastrels and the beggars and mountebanks. Legislation on the theatre is to this day tainted with these associations. The least that can be said of the theatre in its relation to the fundamental law is that it is under suspicion, that the presumption is against it.

Of late years the extreme presumption has been somewhat relaxed. Particularly in the large cities the theatre is seen to be one of the chief businesses of the city. But it is a business of a peculiarly public character, one of the last businesses involving the regular service of a large number of people which has not been brought under close public control, which remains in fact a private business. The city has come to look upon the theatre as a place of public congregation and therefore a place to be kept strictly under the public eye; as a place of large income and therefore a place to be taxed.

The laws as applied to the theatres have come to be of two general purposes, for the upholding of the dignities and the protection of society in its

moral and social and governmental standards, and for the protection of the individual member of the audience while he is an attendant upon the theatre. To these two classes belong all the laws applied to the theatre. To the first class belong the Sunday laws, the laws against vice and obscenity, and such censorship laws as there are. To the second class belong the building restrictions, the fire and tenement restrictions, the laws pertaining to the inner regulation and management of the theatre. Upon the satisfying of these laws depends the securing and retaining of a license.

Now all theatres without distinction have to obey these laws, the commercial theatres as well as the non-commercial theatres. In fact the commercial theatre managers know better how to adjust themselves to the law, sometimes, be it admitted, to the ensign of the law, than do the managers of the new theatres, and therefore they avoid the public signs of discontent. But they are all under continual scrutiny. The organizer of a new theatre should not suppose that he is picked out for adverse discrimination, but he should attempt to learn not only the laws but the particular measures by which in every case the

law is put into practice. By so doing he will escape much trouble.

It is not difficult to learn the laws with reference to theatres. As a rule the laws of the states that apply to theatres are very general. The states delegate to the municipality the right to license and regulate theatres in their own way, reserving such matters as Sunday laws and general safety laws and labor laws. So the laws should usually be looked up in the Codes of the Aldermen of the City. For New York City the laws are in Chapters 3 and 5 of the Code of Ordinances under Amusements and Exhibitions and under the Building Code. In Chicago the laws may be found in Brundage's Chicago Code under IVC and V of the Building Ordinances. For St. Louis they are found in Rombauer's Revised Code of St. Louis.

Let us look first at the building laws, for these are the laws that must first be observed. The chief purpose of the building laws is to provide safety against fire and against panic. The terms of these laws refer therefore to number and placement of exits, to fireproofing of scenery, protecting curtains, to width of aisles, to quality of building material, to slope and position of audi-

torium, and to the presence in the building of tenements and dwelling places. One of the most important laws applying to theatres as well as to other businesses in New York City is the so-called zone law, passed July 25, 1916, regulating the height and bulk of buildings and restricting the locations of trades and industries. As far as this applies to the theatre it lists the theatre under business and requires that no theatre be placed in a residence district. In Chicago there is regulation for frontage consent in residence districts and for the maintenance of certain distances from hospitals, schools and churches. In St. Louis no license can issue except by consent of a majority of the residents of the block.

At one point in the building laws there comes in a distinction that has been often misunderstood. It has to do with the size of the theatre and the consequent restrictions as to fireproofing construction. Several cities, among them New York and Chicago, make a distinction as to building requirements between the theatre that seats 300 people and over and the theatre that seats under 300. In New York City the requirements of absolute fireproof construction apply only to theatres over forty feet in height, containing 5000 square feet and seating over 300 people. In Chicago as

well there is a difference in building requirements for theatres seating more and less than three hundred people.

Granted that the ordinances for fire, tenement, and zone restriction are satisfied in the plans for the theatre, one is ready to apply for a license and to pay the fee. The system of licensing and control maintained by different cities varies but the principles are the same. Here enter further points that are often misunderstood. A license is granted as a rule on account of the public character of an enterprise and this is judged by the fact that an admission fee is charged. Contrary to rather common belief there is, so far as I know, no case in which a seating capacity of under 300 relieves from the necessity of taking a license. If the little theatre is open to the public for fee it is compelled to carry a license. The only way in which a license fee can be avoided is by not running the theatre for profit or by not opening it to the general public. This is true of small theatres as well as large.

The license requirements may be rapidly summarized. In New York the license is granted by a Commissioner of Licenses who has the discretion to include provisions which in his judgment are necessary. The fee for theatres is $500

and for separate performances is $25. In Chicago there are 21 legal classes of amusements of which only the first is important to us. The license is issued by authority of the Mayor, the fee depending on the admission fee to be charged. If the admission is a dollar or more the fee for license is $1000, if from fifty cents to a dollar, $400, and the license fee runs down to $200 for theatres charging a maximum of twenty cents a seat. In Boston there is a licensing board on which the Mayor has great powers. No fee is mentioned. In St. Louis the license fee is $25 a month or $150 a year. In many states and cities the license fees are still merely nominal.

We come now to the consideration of those laws which govern the management of the theatre after it has secured a license. These are in general the laws against vice and immorality, which are subject to wide latitude in character and interpretation, and in particular the laws against Sunday performances and against child-labor on the stage. The last two have been of some importance in the management of theatres. The laws on Sunday observance are based on the moral principles of early Colonial times when even travel was forbidden. The situation in New York is sufficiently typical. The Constitution of the

state has been held to give the legislature the right to protect the Christian Sunday from desecration by such laws as it may deem necessary. A law that attracted a great deal of attention, and still stands as the law of the state, was passed by the legislature of 1860 (Chapter 501) applying particularly to New York County, entitled "An Act to preserve the public peace and order on the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday." This act provided that it should not be lawful to exhibit on Sunday any interlude, tragedy, comedy, opera, ballet, farce, negro minstrelsy or any other entertainment of the stage, or any performance of jugglers, acrobats or rope dancers, under a penalty of $500 to be collected by the Society for the Protection of Juvenile Delinquents, and a loss of the license.

This law was held to be constitutional and was supplemented by municipal statutes providing that one may not exhibit on Sunday "to the public" the performance of any tragedy, comedy, opera, ballet, farce, negro minstrelsy, negro or other dancing, etc., "but nothing therein prohibits sacred or educational, vocal or instrumental concerts, lectures, addresses, recitations or singing."

This law was so far reaching that immediately there began efforts to evade it. The means of

evasion was provided in the last clause above quoted. As it occurs, the association of this law with certain other laws of the state is rather intimate. Peaceful assembly is guaranteed on Sunday as well as on other days of the week, and assemblage for worship is protected. It became necessary only to identify the theatre with peaceful assembly and assembly for worship. There came the question, "What is a theatrical entertainment, and what is a stage, legally considered?" Ingenious men set themselves to discover subterfuges whereby the theatrical could be protected under the sacred. By interpretation of the law theatrical was made to mean that which has a curtain which rises and falls, that which uses costumes and make-up and scene changes and has a continuous story So with regard to these things the sacred concert was invented, with no change of scenery, no make-up and fancy costume, and no continuous story. This played naturally into the hands of the variety entertainment, the only class of theatre which has successfully evaded the Sunday laws.

It is not to be expected that the reforming manager will have any intention of giving sacred concerts. But he has been concerned with two features of the law which for many reasons it has

often been to his interest to evade. On account of the slimness of his budget and the difficulty of getting theatres on week days it is sometimes desirable for him to evade the Sunday laws and to avoid the payment of high fees for license. How are these things done? Either by running as an organization without profit or by running as a private organization without public sale of seats. For many reasons the latter of these plans is the more efficacious. Over private clubs which make no appeal for public support the city has no more control than it has over one's home. But it has control of the building requirements, and whether the organization runs for profit or not, is public or private, these must be satisfied.

There is another type of law which has had a severe influence both on the commercial theatre and the new staging groups. These are the laws affecting child-labor which during the last few years have been passed in most of the states of the union. The oldest of these laws passed twenty or thirty years ago, forbid the employment of children "in dangerous and immoral occupations" by which were meant "acrobatic, singing and dancing exhibitions." Today children under from 14 to 16 are enjoined from playing in places of amusement, or theatres, or working at night,

in thirty-one of the states. The only states which have no laws on child-labor are Vermont, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Mississippi, Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. Eleven states made provisions against child-labor in the theatre which however are subject to relief under certain circumstances upon application for a permit to Judge, Mayor, Commissioner or Inspector. These states which represent the best practice in safeguarding both the child and the theatre are California, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, Rhode Island and Wisconsin.

VII

DRAMATIC LABORATORIES

One who observes Movements, so-called, is continually impressed with the recurrence under various names and different disguises of the identical motive. It is as if behind a confused face of things the driving impulses were but few and that these cloaked themselves in different forms simply to meet particular circumstances. Observing the form one gets the sense of a tremendous confusion of issues, forces contending with each other, blocking each other, hampering by misinterpretation and useless duplication the accomplishment of the end. But judging by the forces behind the form one sees more evidence of a plan in all things. For the forms are many, the forces are few.

This is no less true in the theatre than in other social affairs. As one looks at the recent movements as a whole one wonders which to be the more surprised at, the general lack of real agreement as to what is being undertaken, agreement, that is, in terms and tools and ends, or the real or-

derliness with which in spite of muddled thoughts the different parts are throwing themselves into their proper places. Throughout all these activities two camps appear again and again, the camp of the social thinkers who look upon the drama as the means of saving society, and the camp of the artists who care nothing for social causes, who ask permission only to work in their niche. The suspicion between these two has been more fierce than that between the newer and the older order in the theatre. These have respectively the graces of respect and fear the one for the other. But in the camps there is only mistrust and the imputation of the confounding of great causes.

But there is no essential quarrel between these two. Laud as we will the high lonely place of the artist, he still works with his fellows particularly in the theatre. And what is the social worker doing but creating a theatre in which the artist will have a better chance? There is not even the difference that one has a purpose and the other has but a blind intention to be and do. Both are driven by the same motive, and by coordinate means both are working for the same object. There will probably always be the two groups in the world, those who see Meanings, and those who say "Nonsense." But they are not

enemies or alien to each other. Indeed both represent different moods in the same individual. For what artist has failed at some moment of weakness to see his work in terms of Man, and what social idealist has not wished to dedicate himself to the "God of Things as They Are?"

It often seems to one who looks on from outside that schools do not take up a thing until that thing can get along very nicely without them. True as this is it constitutes no charge against the schools. It is not the business of education to push new intellectual wares. Schools do not create; they test and guarantee.

But beyond this primary function of the testing of values there is another that is coming to have increasing scope. It has to do with the service education can perform in the creation of new truth in its laboratories. The investigative and constructive work of the laboratory has become the rock upon which higher education is built. The laboratory treats not only the exact and the natural sciences but it has come in late years to apply itself to the social forces upon which the functions of democracy depend. In this way the university laboratory has become more than a place of research into social, political and economic affairs.

It has become a veritable pathfinder. By the logic of the activity itself this laboratory work is progressive and constructive. It would be unfaithful to the principle of truth if it did not throw force behind its discoveries and endow with the warmth of approval the new principles it has uncovered.

While this is the case in the utilitarian arts of democracy one notices with a shock of surprise that so far education has refused to apply these principles to those other forces so closely related with the utilitarian, the æsthetic and imaginative interests of the state. On this side universities continue to be simply tabulating institutions. While the world outside is teeming with experiments they refuse to provide these experiments laboratory room or to give to them the use of their machinery or the sanction of their names.

This is no charge against the men in the universities. It refers to a temper that apparently governs in all institutions, a temper that presumes that art is fixed and static, that it is worth while only after it is dead, while politics is vital and is subject to immediate judgment. This attitude has done much to lay an improper emphasis on all that pertains to literature and art in the universities and thoroughly to alienate those who practice the arts in our day. It has made all the

work of the universities in these fields simply a survey of past processes and has closed the door to any laboratory work in the living principles of the arts.

These conditions are serious enough when applied to literature. They are absolutely fatal when applied to the theatre, an art that depends so largely upon instrumentalities apart from the printed page, and vital to the time. A survey of the place of the theatre in the modern university curriculum shows some very striking things. It shows that the theatre is taking a large and increasing place in the outlay of educational work and that a large share of this refers simply to the critical aspects of drama study. It shows an almost hysterical activity on the part of the students in histrionic matters, an activity outlawed and undirected and in some cases crudely repressed. It shows some slight recognition of the dramatic as a function in education but no recognition of the theatre as an instrument of the state. And finally it shows some efforts to establish within the university as a part of the investigative and experimental work laboratories of the theatre. In the only case in which this effort has been successful this laboratory lies outside the university and maintains but a narrow channel of

communication with the institution through the medium of one man.

Without taking up here the question as to whether an art can be taught it is manifest that the universities could to-day be of the broadest service in this active field of a reawakening theatre. Nothing makes this more evident than the futility of the efforts at education put forth by the average dramatic school. The university can apply to the treatment of the problems of the theatre those methods by which higher education is supported and justified, an absence of warmth which is commonly known as the scientific spirit, a power of analysis and organization of intellectual materials, and a breadth of vision that comes from a conspectus of all fields of human activity at one view.

The drama as such is no stranger in college halls. The Greek and Latin dramatists have long had a place in the curriculums. With the collapse of classical studies the Elizabethan dramatists took their place. During recent years interest in the predecessors and contemporaries of Shakespeare has opened the most active field for teaching and investigation. Then the interest stepped downward from these through the Resto-

ration dramatists and the dramatists of the dawn of democracy in Germany, France and England to Ibsen and the problem dramatists. This was partly a natural flow of interest downward. But largely it was a change in kind, a substitution of the old safe materials for materials of a more disputable nature.

As for college performances, these have been frankly frivolous, more frivolous than the ordinary amateur performances, or frankly academic. On the side of the academic performances something has been done. There are many records of performances in college halls of old plays that could not have otherwise been seen. "The Jew of Malta," "The Knight of the Burning Pestle," "Ralph Roister Doister," Peele's "Old Wives' Tale," "The Marriage of Wit and Science," "The Two Noble Kinsmen," "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay," Shirley's "The Opportunity," "The Arraignment of Paris," "Abraham and Isaac" are among the plays recorded in college performances. Recently this interest has been greatly specialized by the encouragement of the performance in college edifices by professional actors of the great classic plays "Œdipus Tyrannus" and "Agamemnon," "Iphigenia in Taurus,"

the comedies of Plautus and Terence, and the French "Phedre" have been so given by leading actors.

In another way the educational institution has been of some service to the stage. It has gathered together the records of the progress of human institutions in museum and libraries. The collections in American drama in the library of the University of Pennsylvania provide the materials upon which the history of American drama will probably be written, perhaps by a Pennsylvania man. What Pennsylvania has in American drama is matched over a larger field by the remarkable Robert Gould Shaw Theatre Collection at Harvard. The Dramatic Museum at Columbia has begun to make collections of manuscripts, volumes and models on the practical side of theatre history.

Here we have the university in a narrow field serving through class-room and museum the cause of the new drama. Its closer participation in these interests is so far limited to the teaching of the principles of dramatic writing. These courses began thirty years ago when Professor Hennequin added to his courses at Yale a course on "The Art of Playwriting." To-day there is hardly a college that does not include some such

course. Now, such a course as this standing alone and unassisted is quite unscholarly. It fails to take into consideration the true nature of the art of the theatre which is an art of architecture more than it is an art of composition. If universities are to be true to their principles they will provide laboratories for this kind of work.

In two institutions scientific work in the practical art of the theatre has gone far enough to warrant careful consideration. In the first of these, a great university, this work has been set up apart from the institution itself by private initiative. In the second, a leading institute of art and technical education the work has been adopted by the institution itself and all the facilities of the institution have been opened to it. The latter provides the only example in the Anglo-Saxon world in which thoroughly scientific work has been projected in the arts of the theatre on the basis of the higher education.

Of recent years Harvard has come to great eminence for its activity in matters of the theatre. Playwrights, designers, producers have come from Harvard and have won enviable rank in the profession. This is to be credited to two circumstances, the fact that Boston is still rich with the best traditions of American culture and the fact

that Harvard has in her service the genius of G. P. Baker. Baker has in him the rare combination of a scientific mind with an alert enthusiasm in all things new and worthy. He was drawn into the drama as both scholar and actor. For some years he has been giving courses in the history of English drama, in the technique of the drama, and in the art of playwriting. Through these courses he has turned out scores of workers into the field of the American theatre.

It must be recognized that in these courses Professor Baker has the support of the university as a whole. They are as much a part of the institution's training for citizenship as are any other courses in the curriculum. Having undertaken these courses there are some obligations both toward the students and toward the science under consideration, the obligation of a thorough treatment of this science by all the instrumentalities of the institution. This obligation Professor Baker was early in appreciating. And certain of his students recognized it as well. And so the 47 Workshop came about through the planning of Professor Baker and the initiative of a group of young women who raised five hundred dollars for the purpose.

The 47 Workshop is a college laboratory in

play construction, using the latter word in its broadest sense. Its purpose is to give the broadest practical experience in the handling of the factors of a production in such a way that the principles underlying the processes may be uncovered. The 47 Workshop was established in 1912 by Professor Baker and a group of Radcliffe women. Its constituency is made up from greater Boston without regard to college membership except that the central group is composed of members from Baker's classes in theory. It is governed by an executive committee representing all the activities of the production of a play, its staging, acting, lighting, and composition. Professor Baker's own relationship with the government of the organization is intimate but flexible. For three years the Workshop was domiciled in an old stable. About a year ago it was given temporary quarters in a university building. The productions are given in Agassiz Hall of Radcliffe College. The Workshop draws no funds from the university. It is supported by volunteer gifts of from ten dollars to $250 and by endowed performances sometimes given as memorials to former members of the Workshop.

It is the purpose of the Workshop to supply that practical training which is indispensable to

the tuition of the playwright. A play is undertaken only after the preliminary work in composition has been completed, when it is ready to be "built." The Workshop is a trying-out place not only of the work of the students but of all those principles by which work in the theatre has been circumscribed. It is in the broadest sense descriptive and analytical, yet experimental and dynamic. Only those plays are done which are considered worthy and these are expected to represent some new departure or a venture aside from principles that have become stiff with much use. The plays are done by a picked company of volunteer actors under the direction of Professor Baker. The laboratory nature of the undertaking applies as well to the principles of acting as to the formulas of playwriting. Care has been taken to draw into the work painters and designers of sets and this work too is put under the magnifying lens. And particular attention has been given to lighting, which is in the hands of one of the most expert lighting artists in the country.

A distinguishing feature of the 47 Workshop is a coöperating audience. After careful selection an audience of four hundred people has been set apart. These are invited to all performances.

In return for this attendance each one is expected to send in to the committee his criticism of the whole performance, acting, play, scenery, ensemble. If a member consistently fails to report he is dropped from future audiences. The audience is as much a working part of the organization as is the player. These criticisms are culled and from them the general reactions of the audience are adduced. Care is taken to discriminate between the reaction of the audience and an absolute judgment. As time goes on the reactions approach more nearly to absolute judgments. Even when they do not they are significant of what the audience demands of a play.

The system of the Workshop has served several ends. It has supplied for young and inexperienced playwrights a test of their work before an audience, with the opportunity to remake the work after a try-out. And it has supplied to the audience the material upon which to sharpen and to test its own choices. To all the workers it has offered the opportunity to try out new ideas and to test in practice the value of old ones. And it has offered an unusual means of observing in one place the synthesis of all the parts of a production.

I have tried to show that the 47 Workshop

represents the laboratory activities of Harvard's contribution to the treatment of modern drama, activities which have not as yet been entirely accepted as belonging to the principle of the institution, and are therefore now an appendage. The new School of Drama of the Carnegie Institute of Technology at Pittsburgh is associated with a somewhat different principle of education and the Institute has accepted its principle far more thoroughly than has the University. As with Harvard the essential fact is that it is a university with a German standard of research, with Carnegie the essential fact is that it is a school of the technology of the arts. Baker approaches his work from the field of scholarship and rhetoric. Stevens approaches his from the field of the painter, the etcher, the practitioner of the manual arts, and the creator of pageants. What holds true of the heads of the work holds true of the systems upon which their institutions are conducted. The one is a university; the other an art school.

The fact that the Carnegie Institute is a school of fine and applied art is not without significance in its Department of the Drama. It brings to bear upon the teaching of the arts of the theatre the regimen of observation, of manual training,

of eye and hand exercise that is the root of art instruction. It treats the theatre as one of the sisterhood of the arts. Its tuition is based not upon theory but upon the training of the faculties. Its rule is, first the hand and then the mind, or better, the mind through the trained hand and eye. That this principle is a just one is evidenced by the intellectual work involved in the best painting and sculpture. There is no reason why the same principle should not be applied to the theatre. There is much in it to correct the method of the old-fashioned dramatic school which as a rule has been a bad combination of theory with external practice without regard to the principles of observation.

Another important feature of the Carnegie Institute School of Drama is the fact that the major influence of the school happens to be that influence which is having the greatest stress in the new art theatre. This is not so much an external as a philosophical influence. The function of art in the new movement of the theatre has been more than the revolution in stage design and background. It has been its function to subject all the practice of the stage to the "pitiless method" that the best artist represents. The influence of the painter has been so strong that temporarily he

has seemed to usurp the place of the dramatic director. It has seemed that the picture might overcome the drama. There is no fear of this. The painter has had a real contribution to make. If in making it he has pressed down the scale a little to his side he has at any rate provided for drama standards of judgment beyond those it has been recently its wont to meet. The Carnegie Institute, dedicated to the balance of all the arts, the manual as well as the fine arts, has healthily represented this service. It has never been the habit of the directors to surrender to the pictorial appeal. Perhaps because pictures are no surprise to their members they have been able to subordinate line and color and design on the stage better than those who have but lately discovered the use of these things in the theatre.

The principles upon which the Carnegie Institute School of Drama is conducted have been carefully studied and as thoroughly worked out in practice. One is surprised in considering this institution to note that it is only four years old and that it has been built up from the ground without the advantage of models. The school represents a nice balance of the practice of the art with the theories by which this practice is illuminated. All the facilities of the well-equipped

Institute are turned over to the School of Drama for the purposes of its training. And it is fortunate that the Institute is so eclectic in its activities that it is possible to find there all the departments that make up the complex art of the theatre.

Always as an ideal the School of Drama keeps before it the standard of general culture. This ideal is represented in the more general items of the curriculum, the languages, the literatures, the sciences of general learning. With this general ideal it combines, to quote the notable words of Mr. Stevens, the theory of "an expanded and stimulated sense of resource" that comes with technical training. As laid out this training is both general and particular to the stage. It deals with pictorial art, painting and sculpture, furniture, architecture, and music. In subjects more closely related to the theatre it deals with costume making, scene painting, voice training, fencing and dancing, and the business routine of the theatre. This technical work is continually interpreted by work of a historical nature in the history of the theatre, of literature, and of folk activities.

All of this lays the basis in general culture and personal equipment for the more concrete work of

the theatre. When it comes to this feature of the work the management of the school is fearlessly and explicitly professional in its leanings. The work in rehearsal and acting is done by men and women who are experienced in the professional theatre. Effort has always been made to secure as producers and coaches men of a thorough grounding in the tradition of the stage who add to this scholarship and imagination. No better men could be thought of for these posts than Donald Robertson, B. Iden Payne, and William Poel, all of whom have been attached to the theatre of the School of Drama as producers.

The School of Drama is first of all a training school. As such its first fealty is to the principles of effective preparation of the students for the profession of the stage. But the task has been interpreted broadly. In these days when the theatre is entering so intimately into the life of all the people it would be difficult for such a school not to take its place with them. This the School of Drama has done for the Pittsburgh community. Provided with the most beautiful little theatre in America it has been able to offer without charge to select groups of Pittsburgh citizens plays new and old that could not possibly be seen elsewhere in productions of first merit. And

the audiences are selected altogether upon the interest evinced. Anyone who really wishes to see a Carnegie production has an opportunity to do so. The list of plays presented on this stage is distinguished and unique. It includes plays of an academic interest either in play or staging as well as examples of the newest styles of staging and play-craftsmanship. Particular care is taken to encourage the attendance of students from the Pittsburgh schools in the hope of fostering in this way the most alert standards of discrimination in the audiences of the future. The School of Drama of the Carnegie Institute is a distinguished example of what an educational institution can do for the art of the theatre when its facilities are wisely bent to this end.

The movement for dramatic laboratories has extended outside the educational institutions and has planted separate institutions in several cities in the country. As a rule this has been done by those who recognized that the way was not yet prepared for new theatres and that the best service they could render was in the systematic training in discrimination and craftsmanship of those willing workers who were coming into the field. The purposes and methods of these institutions

have not differed materially from those I have outlined for educational institutions. They have called upon their directors for a high degree of devotion and self-sacrifice and have been extremely useful in their communities. It is manifest that such work as this, being largely pedagogical, could not offer the rewards that come from work in the theatre.

The first of these Workshops was that of the Wisconsin Players established by Laura Sherry in Milwaukee in 1913. The activities of this workshop are various, including instruction in dancing, playmaking, the rehearsal, production and criticism of plays. In 1915 this organization secured a building in which are represented many of the interests, social and intellectual, connected with the theatre, including workrooms, libraries, a book shop, and a dancing hall with facilities for a small theatre. Miss Elizabeth Bingham has executive direction of the Players' Workshop in Chicago, a laboratory organization which has done excellent work in the production of new plays, the enlisting of players and writers and audience in that city. Though only a year old this organization has already achieved some notable results. The latest project for a theatre Workshop is that of Miss Grace Griswold who

is undertaking to establish in New York an institution for the purpose of centralizing the various activities of the theatre somewhat after the fashion of the endowed scientific and economic foundations. The purpose of such an institution would be partly that of tuition, largely that of research and centralization.

VIII

THE CHILDREN'S THEATRE

CAN there be a children's theatre? The answer to this question depends upon what one means by such an institution. If one means by this a department of the child's general education so adjusted as to involve the child's own participation, using broadly the functions of the dramatic in education then my answer would be that there can be a children's theatre. If on the other hand one means by children's theatre an institution to present plays of a childish type to an audience exclusively of young people, then I should say that there cannot be a children's theatre. There is no demand for such a theatre; it would not be supported, and it would serve no good purpose.

Whatever may be the immediate excuse for the existence of an institution, money making, the serving of a temporary need, the providing of interesting activity for the workers, or the service of men, the continued existence of that institu-

tion goes back to the satisfaction of a demand. It cannot exist unless it is serviceable and its serviceableness may be measured by its support. The children's theatre cannot exist unless there is such a thing as a children's dramatic art. I think it will be found that this does not exist any more than does a children's music or a children's architecture.

Now this does not mean that there are not some plays that are more appropriate for children than others. When these plays are studied it is found that their adaptability does not come from any adjustment to the child mind but it comes from certain absolute qualities in the play itself. Truly considered a play that is properly adapted to children is precisely the play that displays the highest qualities of artistry for adults. A children's theatre is any good theatre, and conversely a good theatre is a children's theatre.

Now if this were what is meant by children's theatre I would be enthusiastic for it. But this is not what is meant. A play for children is usually presumed to be diluted for the childish taste, to treat of childish themes, in a childish psychology, and with a structure puerile and half-baked. Or it is supposed to be a play with an easily discernible didactic value. For this

kind of thing there is no demand and no support.

In an half dozen years a score of children's theatres have been announced. All started with pleasant plans, and some with sufficient money. Yet none has succeeded. In 1912 a Children's Theatre was established by Mrs. Georgia Wolfe in the Carnegie Lyceum in New York playing sketches from Dickens. Under the auspices of the Recreation League of San Francisco a children's theatre was established in the same year by Mrs. D. E. F. Easton, the admission fee being set at ten cents. In 1913 a juvenile theatre was announced for Los Angeles to cost $160,000. The entire theatre was to be in the hands of the children, the little ones being expected to write, to act, and to stage the plays. The next year a children's motion picture theatre was announced for the same city. In 1913 the Washington Centre of the Drama League announced the House of Play, a little theatre to seat 400 children. San Francisco again came forward with a project in 1915, the players to be drawn from the theatres and dramatic clubs of the city. In 1916 the Drama League proposed to establish a children's theatre in Chicago with performances on Saturday mornings at a charge of ten cents. In the

same year the Children's Playhouse was established in Columbus, Ohio, under the conduct of the Public Recreation Commission. In the holidays of 1916 Mrs. Alice Herts-Heniger, Miss Katherine Lord and Mrs. Mary Austin arranged for a series of matinees for children at a down town theatre in New York in a production of one of Mrs. Austin's plays. It is apparent that the matter of a children's theatre has been much canvassed yet none of these undertakings went beyond the announcement stage or at best the first production.

The efforts for a children's theatre were not left entirely to outside experimenters. Professional managers took up the idea and spent some thought and money on the experiment. The most successful children's play given in New York City has been Winthrop Ames's production of "Snow White" given for 92 performances at the Little Theatre in the fall of 1912. David Belasco secured "A Good Little Devil" adapted from the work of Mme. Edmond Rostand and her son for a few performances. W. A. Brady gave a beautiful production to "Little Women." None of these uncovered a demand on the part of audiences. The most costly venture of all was the Children's Theatre undertaken by George C.

Tyler on the roof of the Century Theatre, formerly the New Theatre, on funds provided by W. K. Vanderbilt. A theatre seating 800 was built in the open air on the roof. It was beautifully arranged and charmingly decorated. The designs were all of a nature that would presumably appeal to the childish fancy. Boxes were named "Beauty and the Beast," "The House that Jack Built," etc. The programme was pictured from fairy tales and fables.

The theatre opened at a private performance December 21, 1912, and to the public the following Monday in "Rackety-Packety House" by Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett. Everything possible was done to reach the attention of the children and the approval of their elders. Yet the theatre never played to any business of importance, the attendance seldom rising above 300. According to the director it was the most dispiriting undertaking of his life. After a few weeks the Children's Theatre was made over into a restaurant.

Among those theatres which have made it a point to appeal to children and have made any success of the appeal the greater number have been theatres that made the appeal incidentally to other purposes, in which the general spirit of

the theatre is of a nature to appeal to the childlike joy of men and women as well as of young people. Such was the temper of the Bijou Theatre in Boston, an advanced motion picture theatre which offered a programme of pictures, travel chats, and folk songs. This theatre was undertaken by Mrs. Josephine Clement in 1908 and ran for six years. The Neighborhood Playhouse in New York has made a success in its offerings to children on account of the fact that the spirit of the theatre is always that of a festival. And Stuart Walker has drawn a juvenile audience on account of the joyous and unsophisticated plays he has presented. Too many managers have appealed to children in a spirit of patronage which the child is most ready to discover and to resent. The plays which have best succeeded with children have been those which were written for the mature intelligences of men and women as these rise to the levels of the childlike. "The Blue Bird" and "Peter Pan," to mention the plays which come first to mind, are plays for men and women. Only men and women can truly appreciate the exquisite delicacy and perfect technique they display. And they were favorites with children. The child's mind does not differ from that of the adult. In many respects he is

a better judge for he has not schooled himself, as have too many of his elders, in the council of bad works. He is not ready to accept an apology or to grant an insult to his intelligence. For this reason Shakespeare is always a favorite with the young.

There remain for consideration two organizations which while not children's theatres have been very useful in fostering the dramatic impulses of childhood. Both of these approach the subject from the ground of the school rather than of the theatre. It is probable that when the matter is sifted down it will be found that the real call for the children's theatre comes from those who are interested in education rather than the art of the theatre. The distinction between the children's theatre and the use of the dramatic faculties in education should be clearly drawn. The first raises questions of entertainment and art and its values are presumably absolute. The second is a question of mental development and its values are relative. We are quite willing to grant a place to drama in education without granting a place to the children's theatre in the catalogue of the arts of the stage. Education is premised to the mind of the young. It is fitting that it should use and develop all the latent forces of the young

mind, and so manipulate its materials as to be most useful for this purpose. This the theatre cannot do without confusing its purposes. It cannot obey the behest of truth and at the same time the behest of pedagogical method. By the simple operation of natural law the matter works out satisfactorily. Young people enjoy their work in drama for education. They do not enjoy the purposed entertainments of the children's theatre.

In 1902 there was established by the Educational Alliance of New York City a department of dramatic activity under the direction of Miss A. Minnie Herts and Mrs. Emma Sheridan Fry. The purposes of this work were the utilization of the dramatic faculties in the education of young people particularly of foreign races. The work went on for seven years during which time "Snow White," "Ingomar," "As You Like It," "The Tempest" and a dozen other plays were presented. Then in 1909 the work was discontinued for lack of support.

Out of this early work of the Educational Alliance there came two movements in children's dramatics. The Children's Educational Theatre was under the direction of Mrs. Minnie Herts-Heniger and the Educational Dramatic League

was for some time instructed by Mrs. Emma Sheridan Fry. In neither organization is the purpose primarily one for the improvement of the theatre. The primary purpose is the use of the drama as an instrument in social and educational work. Of the Children's Educational Theatre Mark Twain said, "I consider the Children's Educational Theatre the greatest citizen-making force of the century. I hope I may live to see it firmly established." In taking the Stuyvesant Fish House as the center of its activities the purpose of the Educational Theatre was to utilize the largest number of children possible in the production of each play, and to place the complete production within the reach of thousands. The Children's Educational Theatre was chartered in December, 1912. Though primarily for an educational purpose its importance to the theatre is not slight, through its influence in making children responsible for the standards of their own entertainment.

Also an institution of education through drama the Educational Dramatic League has operated largely upon principles of system and organization. Its purpose has been to formulate and standardize the already broad practice of dramatics in education. No longer is there question

as to the broad place that drama takes in the tuition of youth. The need now is for more expertness and a better system. For this reason efforts have been put forth so to broaden the work of the League as to cover the activities in clubs and schools and recreation centers in New York City and in the state. Fostered first by the People's Institute strength was given to this work when Mrs. Eleanor Robson Belmont joined it.

It is not so much the purpose of the Educational Dramatic League to present plays as to work out a systematic machinery by which those in charge of the presentation of plays shall be instructed and guided. At present there is an informal working arrangement with the Board of Education and with those in charge of the recreational activities of the city of New York to bring all the dramatic forces in their charge under one responsible administration. The time is confidently looked forward to when this relationship will be even more close and efficient.

Though these activities are aside from the central purposes of the theatre, and therefore aside from the scope of this book, one cannot avoid recognizing their real potential importance to the theatre.

IX

PIONEERS

Some years ago the Frohman offices made a survey of their audiences and found that women made up about seventy percent. of the entire attendance upon their productions. These figures have been referred to as explaining the prominent place women have taken in the recent movements of the theatre. But the interest of women in the new movements has been more than one of histrionics. The theatre provided them an outlet for their peculiar genius. Some years back they had turned by the hundreds from women's clubs to the more concrete work of political, social, and economic bureaus. And now the theatre opened a still wider horizon.

And it was well that it was so. Women have that combination of vision, faith and inexperience which was necessary in the theatre at the time. Do I mean that inexperience in the theatre was necessary? Precisely. Without a plentiful fund of inexperience, without the daring that comes

from ignorance of what was in store for one no person five years ago would have undertaken the founding of a new theatre on radical plans. The experienced man of the theatre knows that the path of even the established theatre is full of dangers. The innovating theatre means almost certain disaster. To undertake work in it inexperience was necessary and along with women's positive gifts of vision and skill they were supplied as a rule with this negative advantage as well.

Inexperience was both the cause and the curse of these first ventures. The real lesson one learns from them is that the lessons of the theatre have to be conned whether one expects to run an art theatre or a variety house, an Empire, a Hippodrome, or a Toy Theatre. These early experiments forever dissipated the idea that there can be two kinds of theatres, the theatre that appeals and the theatre that presents. All theatres must appeal, the small as well as the large. The faith in the absolute art principle by which many young producers started out, the belief that the art can achieve its own support without recourse to the showman's aid, was born of inexperience, nothing less. It seems cruel to say so in view of high protestations. But this is a point we

cannot get too clearly in mind. An indispensable part of the work of the theatre is that of the showman. Boggle the fact as we may no theatre can get along if it has not this gift behind it.

What are the marks of the showman? All great dramatists and men of the theatre are showmen. I am almost willing to say that all great artists are showmen. I am sure that all small and successful artists whether in the theatre or out are showmen. The great are showmen plus. The small are only showmen. The showman's gift is partly the ability to make things "stand out," to "display" them. Partly it is the ability to speak in terms that reach common understanding. Partly it is ability in the organization of the materials of the art for its ideal purpose. As it enters into all art it is that trait of verve, apart from craftsmanship, by which a Gainsborough is recognized from his imitator. Sometimes it is called "plunge." The theatre calls it "punch" and "pep." These are not bad words. They stand for a true principle in art that the artist always recognizes though he may not know how to define it.

How much this principle is subject to abuse in the theatre we all know. It is closely allied to charlatanism, to the baser and more vulgar ap-

peals. There is no art in which this necessary principle of all art can be so used to the distress of the true artist. Confounding its abuse with the principle itself, the methods of a Barnum with the human cry of "*panem et circenses*," some have thought that they could make a theatre on a rigorous basis apart from the lure of the showman. And they have failed. I think it is safe to say that the handling of this gift itself provides a test of the fibre of the artist. Not that he shall weakly discard it but that he shall use it with masterful self control is the requirement.

One of these qualities of the showman has a peculiar importance in the theatre. It is the one that has to do with the organization of the materials of art for ideal purposes. The showman not only has to make things stand out, and speak a recognizable language. He has to be a business man, an artist executive. He has to be acquainted with the technique of the theatre, to know how to handle the factors of a production. He has to know how to keep all his forces in line and in proper balance, to encourage and yet curb enthusiasm, to keep the spring of creative impulse alive at the same time that he is subjecting it to an audit system of expense. There is no kind of theatrical company of any description, high or

low, in which this gift is not necessary. It was too much to expect this system to work in new companies made up of volunteer workers, doing they knew not what and subject to the gusts of temperament not uncommon in the theatre. But to the extent that this could not be secured failure was inevitable.

Lately there has been some disposition to assume the intellectual glories of Boston to be those of the past. Lest I seem to fall into this error let me say that Boston is still the intellectual capital of America. And if Boston is Athens then Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island are Attica. Not the least interesting feature of the life of this district has been the persistence in good standing of the social dramatic club. The Cambridge Social Dramatic Club, twenty-seven years old, The Footlights Club of Jamaica Plain, the Brookline Amateurs, the Players of Newton, the famous old Talma Club of Providence, with a long history of excellent productions and a theatre of its own, all these had entered into the life of the community. The amateur was not as despised on the seaboard as elsewhere. Plays were well presented, the training was thorough and expert, in each club there developed corps of actors in

private life who had a professional accuracy in method.

In this atmosphere Mrs. Lyman W. Gale had been reared. She had herself taken a part in amateur dramatics at Weston, Massachusetts. With her colleagues the new trends in things theatrical had pointed her mind to more particular problems. In 1911 she came under the influence of the Irish Players who had had a season in Boston. Lately she had been left a sum of money. And so she determined to establish a theatre.

I am not going to try to tell the intimate history of the Toy Theatre of Boston. No one knows this fully with the exception of Mrs. Gale. But I am going to find it desirable to speak of it specifically, and not to hesitate in drawing conclusions from its very interesting career. Mrs. Gale was so truly the mother of the theatre, it reflected her own spirit and equipment so completely, that I am going to try to deal with it in terms of her own ideals, disillusionments and disappointments. In these more than in anything else are the true problems, many of them quite insoluble, of pioneering work in the theatre revealed.

As the idea of a little theatre rested on Mrs.

Gale's mind it was to be simple, honest, a return to the rudimentary principles of stage practice. The theatre was to be based upon the ideal of co-operation among all the workers, and its conduct was as nearly as possible to be gauged to the demands and to the return. In order to support the theatre in its early days generous subscriptions were secured from a small circle. An old stable was taken at 16 Lime Street and this was remodelled as a theatre seating 129 persons. The theatre was named the Toy Theatre. One hears suggestions that this first theatre was a socially exclusive institution. This was not Mrs. Gale's intention. She desired to secure support from sympathetic people. As it chanced this came first from people of means and leisure. But she had no intention of making the theatre in any way a class institution.

One of the first measures necessary was to secure a corps of working members of interests sympathetic with those of the theatre. How to get that proper combination of centralization and advisory control, of the free initiative necessary and yet the wide support no less necessary was a problem. It was not made easier by the fact that there are as many minds as men in the remaking of the theatre and the director had come into her

work more expecting to experiment than with settled plans to execute. The first result of these conditions was a failure to secure in Boston a representative committee which would stand with the director before the city. In large measure Mrs. Gale was compelled to stand alone.

Some principles stood out clearly. The work was to be coöperative and uncompensated; the venture was to pay for itself as it went along; it should depend upon and create a settled audience; it was to represent new plays and as far as possible tend to American plays; productions were to be simple. For the carrying on of this programme an amateur company was gathered together, subscriptions were called for, the assistance of artists and craftsmen was enlisted. Arrangements were made for playing only three times a week, for subscribers, for the general public and for students. So successful was the programme that in spite of all drawbacks the Toy Theatre ran for three years in its Lime Street House and covered expenses.

Now we have to consider how unforeseen circumstances entered into the tale of the theatre. It is the business of the theatre to call upon the best artists and craftsmen in their respective professions and to create an art out of their coöpera-

tive powers. Boston had in Livingston Platt an eye and hand and constructive brain. He had had some experience with little theatres in Spain and in Bruges but so far his gifts had not been turned to the service of the theatre in America. Naturally enough such a gift as his had to be used, and if there was not a place for it in the scheme as outlined a place had to be made. The theatre must make a way for the strongest new motives or the theatre will fail. With Livingston Platt there came into the Toy Theatre a force that more than any other gave it national note. The fact remains that the little theatre had not been built for that force. The artistic influences were too emphatic and the expense was too great. Eventually this force gave the whole theatre a bent away from the modest and rudimentary service it was expected to render.

Partly as a result of this accession to its forces the little theatre in Lime Street began to prosper. Here entered the second conflicting element in its history, an element that finally confounded it. The manager of a theatre has to handle two sets of intractable instruments. The first are artists who are likely to be blind to every call but their own. The second are men of a colder and more calculating type, the men who whisper the broader

utility values of enterprises and who fortify their suggestions with all manner of high-sounding reasons. It did not take the latter class long to discover the Toy Theatre, and from them soon came the suggestion that a new theatre building would be advantageous.

Now no one can blame the business wit that saw in the Toy Theatre an opportunity for another profitable investment. The directors of the theatre were not compelled to take the hint. But there is a weak point in the armor of most idealists of the theatre. In one it is the call to be seen in New York. In another it is the temptation to combine in one person the arts of actor, author and producer. The weak point in the armor of the Toy Theatre was the desire for a building. There resulted a house seating 595 persons and situated on the well-travelled Copley Square. I am not going to question the motives that entered into the building of this theatre. Certain it is that the change meant a shifting of values and a loss of all that the experiment had represented. The theatre was undertaken at a moment in which the clear ideals of the past had become hazy. It represented in fact another business venture attaching itself to the fledgling wings of a little experimental theatre. When it didn't

pay as a little theatre it was necessary to find means to make it pay.

From this time on the story can be quickly told. Conditions were absolutely set against the little venture. It was confronted with those delays in building and interferences on the part of the law that the commercial manager knows how to handle but are fatal to the novice. The best months of the season were lost waiting for a building. A full rental of $12,000 was paid for what amounted to the tag ends of two seasons. Now it came to be a matter no longer of trying to represent ideals but of frantic effort to find some way to pay the rent. The amateur company was no longer to be considered. So the "professionals" were turned to, the only professionals who could be secured for dubious ventures, those excellent persons who themselves have an axe of ambition or of innovation to grind. Some good things were done but not one of them was a success and each venture only the further loaded the management with debt. Promptly as the clock struck at the end of the patch-work season the theatre was taken over by the owner and given to the movies. The director had lost $20,000; others had lost unguessed amounts. In 1916 the theatre became the Copley Square and was the scene of

Henry Jewett's interesting experiment in stock in a repertory of English plays.

So ended the career of this first little theatre, a notable and most instructive experiment in a new field. Its list of plays was not distinguished. Few new American plays of value were uncovered. The enterprise displayed some of the frailer characteristics of idealism, the characteristics that make this respectable term somewhat suspicious to the eyes of practical men, bearing out the idea that idealism is so-called only as long as it doesn't work. As soon as it begins to succeed it is no longer idealism. The whole venture gives the effect of the confusion of inexperience. Having said this one must say also that it was absolutely inevitable that the venture should have displayed all these things. The director had against her not only her own lack of knowledge but the general misunderstanding that surrounds the venturesome thing. Managerial control of diverse forces, a mind keenly set on the important ends, strong in discarding false methods and temptations, were too much to expect in the earliest days of new theatrical enterprise. It needs to be remembered for Mrs. Gale not only that she blazed a path but that her plan was right. If she was unfortunate it was in its execution and not in its

design and the execution lay largely outside of the control of any man or woman.

For several years Philadelphia has been vigorously claiming the credit of being the cradle of the American drama. Whether this be true or not it can at any rate safely be said that Philadelphia is the home of the first little theatre that has weathered all storms and persists up to this day. Even in this Boston has its share, for Mrs. Harriet Jay was a Boston woman before she went to Philadelphia in 1911 to establish the Metropolitan Dramatic School. Two years later by the assistance of Mr. F. H. Shelton she built the Little Theatre in Delancey Street, near 17th, seating 330 people. The theatre was opened March 3, 1913.

From that day to this the Little Theatre of Philadelphia has travelled a devious and difficult course. Changing form several times, many times on the point of closing, it has always managed to come out "right side up with care" at the end. There is one page in the record of this theatre I am not able to write. That page is budget. Without knowing how much money has been lost I cannot satisfactorily interpret the facts before me. But all the evidences point to the suspicion

that this has been a rather costly venture. Some of the facts I shall bring up may strengthen this suspicion by revealing the evidences upon which it is based.

In the first place the Little Theatre of Philadelphia is not strictly a little theatre in the sense in which I expounded this term in the chapter on "The Little Theatre." It lies somewhere between the little theatre and the professional theatre. It is a little theatre in size and in a certain freshness of appeal. It is not a little theatre in the sense of reducing the machinery of production to the lowest terms. It has always tried to play every night in the week; it has usually had a paid company; its settings are expensive; it has had high-priced producers; it has paid royalty for many of its plays. Evidently this theatre comes nearer to the system of Miss Horniman's company in Manchester than to the touch-and-go systems of the little theatres.

Now these things provide the difference between the heavy and sometimes prohibitive expenses of professional companies and the scant financial programmes of the amateur experimenters. And this difference usually amounts to the difference between keeping the theatre open and closing it, for with an innovating run of plays there is not

usually available an audience large enough to support the higher-priced system. That audiences at the Little Theatre have not been sufficient to support this professional scale is made clear by the frequent public crises through which the theatre has passed.

Other evidences of the same thing are drawn from the nature of the repertory of the theatre. Far too large a share of the energy of the Little Theatre has been expended in trying to find out what the public wants, and too small a share has been given to building up a consistent policy. This the theatre quite lacks. If there is any policy it differs hardly at all from that of the commercial theatre in trying to learn how best to purvey to the audience that supports it. This has given an air of confusion and the haphazard to the work of the theatre.

In laying out their repertory the directors of the theatre have been subject to "influences" and these usually the influences of policy borrowed from the commercial manager. The theatre opened with a shocker and even the unfortunate experience with this play has not entirely convinced the management that the shocker is not a business getter. Examples of plays have been borrowed from every school and from every move-

ment. No new American play of any distinction has been discovered. As a final recourse the theatre has fallen back on Shaw. Now, while Shaw may still be the dramatist of the highbrows he no longer demands courage. He is even a little trite. The one requirement of the little theatre is the piquing of interest, the startling of attention by a continual exercise of fancy. On account of the system upon which it has run the Philadelphia Little Theatre couldn't do that and so it turns from shockers and scandal plays to the safety of Shaw.

In pursuit of the fickle audience some really excellent measures have been taken in the engagement of good actors and producers. Among the visiting companies in this theatre have been Annie Russell's company in the old comedies, the Théâtre Français d'Amerique, the German Stock Company from the Irving Place Theatre, and the Washington Square Players. Among the producers have been Frank Reicher and B. Iden Payne. Among the actors have been a dozen or more of national reputation. But because the theatre lacked a settled policy, or because it has never held to a temporary policy long enough to give it a fair trial few of these have entered into the substance of the institution.

These conditions are reflected in the audience. This displays few marks of difference from the strange nonplussed beast forever ridden by the professional theatre. Though a subscription system is used by the Little Theatre no specific audience has been found. The theatre still appeals by broadsides and general advertising to the mass of Philadelphia's population. A city of two millions is canvassed regularly to fill a little building seating about three hundred. Aside from the expensiveness of this arrangement the Little Theatre is missing a great opportunity to bind to itself a specific audience, selecting itself out from the population by its approval of the aims and methods of the theatre.

To me the Little Theatre of Philadelphia has the appearance of a little theatre that is ashamed of its class. Ensconced in a small building it has tried to live up to the dignities of a stock company. In the attempt it has found itself burdened not only with the expenses of the commercial theatre but with the added loads that belong to the innovator. An almost unbelievable industry has been put into its work. Nothing but blind devotion to her cause would have kept the director so consistently at work during five seasons. But unless I am mistaken she will have to

clarify either her theories or her practice in some important respects before her theatre can be considered a success.

In a system in which inexperience and indecision are likely to be qualifications for leadership it is grateful to the critic to find a man who bases his work upon rigorous ideas. I cannot find that Maurice Browne's association with the theatre has been close. I do find that he has known what was in his own mind and has done it rather consistently.

The Chicago Little Theatre was established in 1912 by Maurice Browne and his wife Ellen Van Volkenburg. A room was secured on the fourth floor of the Fine Arts Building. This was neatly adapted into a theatre seating about a hundred people. It had a small stage, a good lighting system, dressing rooms, offices and tea rooms. In this the theatre was at home from the time of its establishment until 1917. At the present time the Chicago Little Theatre is in a transition stage. But I prefer to speak of it in the present tense.

The achievements and principles of the Chicago Little Theatre are suggestive. It is one of the few theatres which the founders are willing to

admit has a purpose, the object being "the creation of a new plastic and rhythmic drama in the United States." For my part I would be content had this purpose not been named. It seems to limit the scope of Mr. Browne's future work without in fact doing so, for I am glad to say that many of the best things he has done cannot be explained by this purpose.

Maurice Browne has always clung to the little theatre idea in both its narrow and its applied sense. He started out by believing thoroughly in the illusion value of the small theatre, and in the codes of production which its miniature size demanded. And he believed in the little theatre in its applied sense as well. By that I mean that he reduced his machinery of production to a point as near as possible to its support. He undertook no expenses for professional actors, he produced his plays only two or three times a week, and he has developed an audience which would support him.

The most noteworthy characteristic of the Chicago Little Theatre has been the rigorous code of art with which it has been conducted. I know of no institution of the kind that has so consistently kept to a pre-ordained set of principles. Browne's desire has been to subject dramatic art

to a cold and logical set of principles, to expel from it all the adventitious, the superficial, and the temporary. He has followed his master, Gordon Craig, in his distrust of personality in acting. In pursuance of this position he has never published programmes giving the names of actors. How he has succeeded in keeping the loyalty of players under such conditions I cannot imagine. It is a mark of the strength of the man's own devotion that he has been able to call forth so much devotion from others. I understand that recently he has not been so successful in this, and that some of the more troublesome recent experiences go back to the fact that while making a perfect machine of art he has not been able to build an institution of men and women. Whatever may be said of art in general, or even the art of the theatre as such, the business of the theatre demands the faithful and zealous coöperation of men and women who are identified with the enterprise. What he has gained in an absolute sense has come at some expense to his esprit de corps.

The repertory of the Chicago Little Theatre is divided into two distinct classes of productions, according to the system of staging followed. The first class comprises all those plays of a fanci-

ful or poetic nature which are subject to staging by the well-known principles of Gordon Craig. To Craig Browne is a faithful adherent. His favorite plays, the plays by which he himself stands, are all subject to staging by the plastic system which by his view is the basis of all dramatic art. All the other springs of the dramatic are discarded for those which lie in sense and sight. This theory involves the complete reconstruction of the factors of a production. It places first emphasis upon the masses, the lines, the draperies, the colors and the lights, by which the backgrounds of the production are arranged. To this principle of the plastic Browne adds another, that of the rythmic element in drama. I believe he applies this as well to all the factors of a production but as I do not understand it I shall not attempt to expound it, except to refer to it as another of the abstract controls which the producer holds over his productions.

The productions he has made under these codes have been remarkable pieces of arrangement of dramatic materials, manipulations of colors, warmth, and illumination, but so distant from what had always seemed drama to me as to leave me perplexed. But they are more than craftsmanship. They had in them many of the ele-

ments of real creation, whether dramatic or other I do not know. These plays which constitute Browne's first interests have not made up the largest share of his repertory. The great majority of the plays of the Little Theatre have belonged to a genre of point-device comedy and fantasy in which the producer has accomplished some remarkable results with inexpert materials.

The Chicago Little Theatre has been a glowing coal sending sparks in many directions. Not alone has it been concerned with producing plays for grown-ups. One of the most interesting features of its work has been the Little Theatre Puppets, created by the directors themselves after study on the Continent. With these puppets there has been developed one of the most successful children's theatre adjuncts in the country. In addition to this department of the work there is a department of entertainments by outside artists.

A study of the repertory of the Chicago Little Theatre shows that the directors have been able to accomplish very little for the new American playwright. Nowhere in the prospectus of the organization is any such purpose mentioned. In fact no claim is made for an American theatre. This is a little refreshing in a time when rather too

much attention has been given to this particular angle of the subject. In Browne's idea the theatre is a universal institution. It belongs to no nation nor code. Its fealty is to the truths only of art and beauty. Naturally a theatre founded on this rock will be under some disadvantages. In theme, in manner, in types of character, the Little Theatre has thrown down no anchor into the locality. It might as well be in Paris or in Moscow as in Chicago. Chicago has been proud of it but it has not been able to adopt it as its own. The position of the Little Theatre in its niche high up in a city building is symbolic of the place it is taking within but above the city's life.

X

THREE NEW YORK THEATRES

No one can say that hearty labor has not been put into these little theatres. Futility there has been and a great deal of scattering effort. Vast tasks have been undertaken and small tasks have been failed in. Problems vaguely guessed have been attacked with persistency worthy of clearer thinking if not of better causes. Men have undertaken the creation of an audience, the awakening of a social consciousness, the stimulation of community self-expression when they could not make out a balance sheet of expense, direct a company, or handle a stage crew. By a strange fate they have had a measure of success in the larger undertakings while they were overcome by the difficulties of the smaller. Then we see following this group another group who work more concretely. Facing the high expense and prohibitive systems of the established theatre we now find the guild of artists delving down to the low-

est terms of the art of the theatre and joyously building it up again from the bottom. In the cause they have expended energy, enthusiasm, more or less wisdom, and hard got money. Some of them succeeded, others failed because they lacked that knowledge of the technique of the stage as a trade that is still necessary for success. Perhaps it isn't necessary to know that a prop is not a stage brace, that the tormentor is not the stage director, but the lack of such knowledge has been a great handicap so far.

We have now to consider three theatres which from the start arrange themselves on another plane. All are New York theatres. All are set in that Bagdad of the theatre, the city of the thousand nights in one, and all are run by successful showmen. Back when the twentieth century was new a young man took the Castle Square Theatre in Boston and put in a stock company. Before long the rumor was spread abroad that Back Bay had discovered Castle Square. A few years later this young man had a chance to go to New York to take charge of a great new theatre that had been erected for a civic purpose. He managed this theatre in a workmanlike manner for two years, keeping his own counsel, if he had

any troubles, maintaining a discreet silence about them, presenting always to the world a door-stone neatly scrubbed and a front of imperturbable calm. The New Theatre closed its doors and still he said nothing. But his next step was characteristic. He moved from the marble and gilt of the palace in Central Park West into a little theatre of his own, as extremely diminutive as the other had been extremely large, as neat and appropriate as the other had been garish and of bad taste. The Little Theatre of New York, which seats 299 people, was at the time the smallest theatre in New York. It was opened March 11, 1912.

In studying the record of the Little Theatre of New York it has to be understood that Mr. Ames has explicitly allied himself with the professional traditions of the stage. In the ten years since his Castle Square days he has solidified this association. He has never been a believer in "movements" nor has he permitted himself to be dragged into one. His only conscious purpose, so far as I can discover, has been to give good plays "a little bit better than seems necessary," and if possible to be compensated for the service, though so far the latter feature has been subordinate.

Though he disclaims membership in a movement there are respects in which Mr. Ames's experience in the Little Theatre must be studied in the light of contemporary tendencies. His opening of the Little Theatre was understood by him to be distinctly a step within the profession. The theatre was to be conducted by a professional corps, the actors were to be men and women of a distinguished place in their calling, the plays were to be contracted for on a royalty basis and they were to run as long as possible. The audience was to be secured wherever possible by the methods in vogue in the commercial theatre. No particular effort was to be made to attach a certain audience to the theatre. There was no difference between this and the system of the commercial theatre except in the size of the theatre and the implicit contract that only the best plays should be presented and in the best fashion.

And yet limit himself as he would, the opening of the theatre was a commentary on the conditions I have been discussing in this volume. Why did Ames build a little theatre? I think his predominant aim was an artistic one. His experience with the New Theatre had been emphatic, to say the least. What he probably desired was

a theatre in which plays of the intimate type could be presented in a manner fitting to their temper, a theatre in which not only the stage but the audience chamber was fitly administered to the mood. Whatever purposes he had outside the purpose of doing the best thing well were secondary. He knew that there would be a certain loss both on account of the limitations in size of the auditorium and on account of the character of his plays, but he planned to make this up by charging a higher and uniform admission fee for the entire house. He did this on the theory that there is an audience in New York able to ignore the price of seats if it gets what it wants.

At this point the first flaw in the reasoning occurs. That there is such an audience we may admit for the sake of the argument, though wealth has not shown very much more disposition to flock by itself in America than have the middle classes or the workers. But grant that there is such an audience and it does not at all follow that this audience will necessarily want the best play or the best acting. It may want some other kind of thing represented here and there among other theatres to which its fickle fancy leads it. To secure an audience for the best, or let us say for those fresh and creative things which at the

moment seem the best to the producer, one has to cut athwart the audience of money and create an audience anew out of all classes.

Now the Little Theatre was under a heavy expense. In land rent, investment, cost of management, advertising, royalty there was no appreciable advantage over the large theatre. It has always been Ames's system to ignore expense in getting the best players. So there was no saving here. His settings offer no chance for saving. All in all, his little theatre was run on about the same budget of expense as an average sized theatre would carry. Consider this expense budget in connection with possible income. Three hundred seats at an average of two dollars and a half gives a maximum income per performance of $750, or an income of $6000 a week. Now we know that in other New York theatres a company is expected to take a minimum of $6000 a week. This situation would not be so bad were it not that the takings of the Little Theatre have never reached the maximum. The fees themselves are so high as to discourage a great many people who would otherwise come. We see why it has been more economical to keep the Little Theatre dark than to run it, and why we must agree with Mr. Ames that the little

theatre is at a disadvantage financially when run with professional expense.

Common arithmetic is against any diminutive theatre that tries to run on a professional basis of expense. There is not an audience in New York for plays of an innovating type willing to pay what Mr. Ames asks. And even if there were such an audience he would barely pay his expenses in the Little Theatre and no more. Let us look at the record of the runs of the Little Theatre. The theatre was opened March 11, 1912. That season it played one play regularly at night for eight weeks and two short plays were run in for 17 matinees. The second season the theatre played 19 weeks with two plays and one children's play run in for 92 matinees. The third season it played 28 weeks in three plays; the fourth season 28 weeks in one play. The fifth season was dark, and the sixth season covered twenty weeks in three plays. The theatre was open for business a total of 104 weeks in five seasons. Counting the season as forty weeks and excluding the year Mr. Ames was out on account of illness we have here total runs covering only one half of the available time. I cannot escape the conclusion that the balance of probability was so much against a production making

money in the Little Theatre under the system by which it was run that it was cheaper to keep the house dark than to play in it.

Now it must be understood that no play has been given at the Little Theatre that has not been in one way or another a distinguished piece of work. There was hardly one that did not have adherents among critics and audiences. Judged by standards of success that are current these plays were worthy of prosperity. And yet the dice were loaded against the theatre. In undertaking this venture within the professional theatre he had essayed a hopeless task. He had gone only half way and had landed outside the city. Either he should have held to the theatre of ordinary size, or, taking the little theatre, he should have reduced his standard of expense to fit. This Mr. Ames has been unwilling to do. His artistic nature recoils from any recession from the finest standards of a production. And so he has a white mouse on his hands. If anything shows the need of the little theatre movement it is the little theatre that has consistently stayed out of the movement. For the movement has meant that economy of production, that organization of resources, by which the insoluble problems of the professional theatre may be faced.

There are evidences that Mr. Ames has discovered that logic lies against his plan of management, and that this discovery has introduced into his work, mainly into his choice of plays, a note of indecision and of compromise that has weakened his hold on his audience. It soon became evident that he had given up offering plays to an audience and had begun to pursue the audience. He always kept within the limits of propriety in selection, now and then putting in a little pungent sauce as an appetizer, and no theatre in New York has provided such productions. But too soon it became a case not of the Little Theatre giving its audience such and such a new morsel selected by its director, but a case of the director holding out a certain play to lure an audience into his playhouse.

There is all the difference in the world between an audience going to a theatre and a theatre going to the audience. When they began to put up twinkling electric signs over a theatre entrance there was spelled the end of the era in which the audience came to the theatre. Then began the period of the feverish allurement of audiences that we have been living through for the last dozen years. In one week two years

ago we received announcements of two new institutions of the theatre. In the first statement neither seemed to differ much from many others that had been projected. As time has passed it has become clear that each had been planted in a more natural soil than its neighbors, that it was beginning to grow in that soil, that audiences, actors and playwrights were showing a disposition to foster the new enterprises. In these theatres we have seen beginning again the more natural process by which the audiences come to the theatre.

Down in the heart of the East End of New York City, in the center of a foreign city of a million inhabitants, where still may be seen on the streets the market wagons of Russia, there lies the district out of which have come several significant enterprises in the new drama. In the Educational Alliance on East Broadway there was established the first New York Children's Theatre. The Portmanteau stage was first set up in the hall of Christadora House. And the Neighborhood Players began their work as an adjunct to the Henry Street Settlement.

This Neighborhood Playhouse has been variously regarded. It has been looked upon as an important contribution of the theatre to the solu-

tion of social problems, as the offering of theatrical art to the amalgamation of our peoples and the Americanization of the foreign born, and as an experiment in the creation of a theatre in the midst of a society in which the materials are most ready for this work. It is in the latter light, I believe, that those who have been responsible for the Neighborhood Theatre look upon their work. They have burdened their minds with very few doctrines and have permitted themselves to think of few ultimate purposes. They have been conscious only of using their materials as their knowledge and energy dictated.

This principle is a fortunate one. We have had theatres established by the fiat of directors and pushed through by force of money and will against serious obstacles. Here was a theatre that never went further than its materials warranted, that expanded always out of the funded accumulation of past achievements. The most important thing about the theatre is the naturalness of its growth. What is owed to its founders is not the will that established it but the wisdom that was able to foster and develop latent social impulses. Literally nothing in the Neighborhood Theatre has been superimposed. Money has been provided in plenty. But here it was a case of

money coming to the aid of brains and understanding and not, as has so often been the case, money as a substitute for both.

A few of the circumstances that conduced to the success of this theatre must be mentioned. The first of these is that the theatre associates itself naturally with the play functions of society. Garble and degrade them as we may, these are the sources of the theatre. And he who would establish a new theatre must build by these principles. Now, the founders of the Neighborhood Theatre knew that nothing is more inconsistent with the play principles than a settled social programme. For this reason the Neighborhood Playhouse has never been considered a part of the machinery of the Henry Street Settlement. It is an outgrowth of the settlement, a flowering of its spirit and work. As some one has said, it is the Henry Street little girl who went on the stage, over whom Henry Street keeps a benevolent eye and loving care while leaving her free to find her own career.

As it occurs, the natural impulses of play are in this neighborhood maintained more in their natural state than in any other district in the metropolis. The people of the neighborhood had been theatre-goers at home. They brought with

them their folk life, that flexible, garrulous sociableness—one can see it on the streets—out of which the activities of the festival grow. And it was from these festival activities already present, only directed and enriched by nurture and care that the activities of the playhouse grew. For several years all the activities this theatre knew were simply the festivals, the dances, of the people comprising the neighborhood. To-day while the purely theatric doings have gone far the festivals continue as the source and soul of the whole affair.

Let no one think I am presenting this theatre as an example of spontaneous social growth. Nothing is further from the truth. The district would have gone on indefinitely in its own way and never have been heard of for its theatrical ambitions had it not been for those who were wise enough to seize and develop its potentialities. The important thing is the spirit in which this was done. The one external circumstance that cannot be ignored is the fact that in the guidance of the natural forces of the district there was gathered together as wise and expert a group of enthusiasts as ever handled a lash line or pinned on a ruff. One notices with a certain humility that in the group that has guided the Neighbor-

hood Playhouse to success there has been no place for a man. The Misses Irene and Alice Lewisohn had gone to the Henry Street Settlement to teach dancing. They had discovered a certain famous dancing teacher long before he had become the master of the dance to the American aristocracy. With them was joined in the work of the theatre Miss Helen Arthur who had learned the ropes in the office of the most practical manager in the country. Miss Agnes Morgan had been one of Baker's first pupils in drama at Radcliffe. And Mrs. Sarah Cowell LeMoyne represented all that was best in the tradition of the American stage, in taste, in diction, and in action. To these the success of the theatre is to be credited.

As has been said it all began with festivals. Then about seven years ago the Dramatic Club of the Henry Street Settlement was formed. Plays were given once a year in Clinton Hall, one of the halls provided by private interests for the use of the neighborhood. These plays were rehearsed at night. Actors came from the neighborhood and there was little difficulty in finding young men and women of spirit and ability. Not only the annual performance but the long course of preparation came to be events of first magnitude. Meanwhile the dancing classes and festi-

vals were continuing. They were learning the forms of all the countries of the old world. And by natural stages there was gathered together an institution without a building constructed of the human fabric of a crowded neighborhood. As "The Theatre" had come the time had come to give it a house. And so they built a home for an institution that was calling for one, not as others have done, building a theatre and waiting for the spirit to come and occupy it.

They tell us that when the theatre was built (including ground and additions it cost about $150,000) they thought they might have to wait two years before they began to attract many to their performances. But from the date of the first opening to this the theatre has always been practically sold out. It was built as a neighborhood theatre and so it is. But in two years the neighborhood has expanded to cover Greater New York. Not only do the actors come from as far away as Newark and the Bronx but the audiences come regularly from up town. Special street cars now stop before the door, and when the car stops there is an exodus of passengers recruited from the subway, the elevated and the river tubes.

The directors of this theatre insist that they are running a theatre and not a sociological ex-

periment station. And as their theatre is a success it may pay us to inquire as to some of their activities. At the basis of these of course is the service of the neighborhood and so the larger share of the work of the theatre is given over to productions of a local appeal. Every night, with the exception of Monday night, which is dark, and Saturday and Sunday nights, is given over to motion pictures. The price of admission is five cents. The best available pictures are secured regardless of cost, and in addition there are given extra features, short talks, songs, and one-act plays. This feature of the theatre's work has always paid for itself. Where there is a surplus it is expended on future productions.

Another neighborhood feature is the entertainments for the children. These are given on Saturday afternoons. They grow out of the children's festival groups which are attached to the settlement. They comprise pantomimes and children's plays, always dealing with original materials, and produced and played by the children under expert direction. For these the fee is ten cents and they too are self-supporting.

We now come to the larger theatrical features of the work. Six years ago when they began to give plays they laid the nucleus of an amateur

company. Though this company changes from time to time in membership it remains stable as a whole and the theatre now has an acting group of thirty-five, augmented by a dancing group of sixty. With the acting group, and with the artists, light men, mechanicians, property men, costume workers, the producing of the theatre is done. In this branch of the work the theatre has attached itself to the newer movements in stage art, for plays, playing, and setting. The stage is excellently equipped. It had the first circular fixed horizon dome in the country. Experiment in effects is the order and success is the rule. The list of plays produced in this branch comprises several of Dunsany's, many there first presented in the country, several new American plays, and some of the more ambitious pantomimes from Russia.

For these performances a maximum of fifty cents is charged. Each play is done for five weeks or ten times. In order to secure variety in offering, after five weeks of plays there comes a festival period of an equal length. This department too pays for itself. But no department of the theatre's work is permitted to show a profit. The theatre has been very hospitable in taking in productions of other managements, particularly those

showing novelty. For these the management sometimes makes the productions. In this way David Bispham, the East and West Players, and Gertrude Kingston have been given place in the theatre. Behind this public work there is done all the work that is necessary for the production. Everything is the product of the work-rooms of the theatre. Costumes, properties, scenery, lighting effects, are all made at home. The theatre is a coöperative guild of enthusiastic craftsmen, artists, and artisans.

The question arises, how can all this be done and be made to support itself. While other theatres are trying and failing how can this theatre succeed. The answer goes back to the non-commercial nature of the enterprise. This is more important than it may seem. It depends upon the hearty coöperation of interested workers. The spirit of zest is kept alive by the fact that the workers are always kept interested. They are doing what they want to do instead of doing what they are compelled to do to get an audience. The expense budget has been carefully worked out. The theatre, a small one seating about 450, can hold between $160 and $190. This gives an income for each play production covering ten performances of about $1500. By careful figur-

ing the management has been able to secure the usual production for just about this sum. Sometimes the production costs more and sometimes less than the income but year by year income covers expense for productions. Comparing these figures with the figures given in the first chapter, it is found that the expenses of the Neighborhood Theatre for a production are but a small percentage of those of a commercial theatre. The mechanical features of the production, staging, costumes, lights, are of the very highest class. It should be understood that these figures are exclusive of any rent item, about which more in a moment.

The system of production has had an influence on the audiences. Audiences have learned that they can always see something interesting and fresh at the Neighborhood Theatre. For this reason they come to the theatre, they do not compel it to come to them. Whereas the expense of advertising of the commercial theatre runs from 15 to 20 percent. of the total income the expense is reduced for the Neighborhood Playhouse to a very low figure indeed. No efforts are made directly to lure the audience. No newspaper advertising is carried, and no newspaper tickets are sent out. It is understood that seats are ready

for such newspaper men as desire them but nothing is done to urge the attention of the newspapers. The audience of the Neighborhood Theatre has selected itself. All that it is necessary to do is to send out cards to the 3500 on the special list and occasionally to 1800 on the general list and the work is done. Unlike other small theatres the Neighborhood Theatre has no subscription list.

When we are answering the question of expense in connection with the Neighborhood Theatre it is necessary to keep in mind that the building, all that is known as the plant, is provided without rent and without interest charges by interested backers. The income of the theatre has only to pay for what goes on before the footlights. No part of it goes for any of the items which in the commercial theatre amount to fifty percent. of the production expense. Now it must be admitted that to this extent the Neighborhood Theatre is an endowed theatre. It could not conceivably run on any plan other than that of continual support so far as the building is concerned. And precisely to this extent the answer given by the Neighborhood Playhouse as to artistic freedom and support is only half an answer. It is because this theatre depends more upon the wisdom

with which it has been conducted than upon the gratuities with which it is endowed that it has been raised above the level of the subsidy experiments that have been such melancholy failures. The important things are the coöperative method of government, the healthy relationship with its patronage, the artistic freedom and freshness of its work, its thorough business-like economy without any leaning toward the box office. These things make this one of the two most significant theatres in America today.

We have seen that on account of its gratuitous support of a building the Neighborhood Theatre leaves the question of popular support of an artistic theatre only half solved. Is the problem incapable of solution? It is by no means necessary to answer this question in the negative as yet. For support of a continuing optimism we can refer to another New York theatre which has undertaken a task even more difficult in a financial sense than that of the Neighborhood Playhouse and has so far progressed toward success as to warrant hope for its perpetuity. I refer to the Washington Square Players. Naturally no one can say that this theatre has solved the problem until it has behind it a fund for the

support of lean years. But what this theatre has already done is very encouraging indeed.

The development of the Washington Square Players has been not less natural than that of the Neighborhood Playhouse. The Players are the outgrowth of a little group that used to foregather in Washington Square, radicals, socialists, progressives, artists, writers, and plain men and women. There they used to talk until early in the morning. They believed in talk, talk as the alembic of deeds, the coalescence of personality, the flail of values by which the false is threshed from the true. Long before the Players had come to pass as an actuality their coming was prepared for in discussion.

In this early group we have the necessary factors of the new constitution of the theatre. Here was the guild of artists whose enthusiasms took the place of the cold organization by commercial compact of the regular theatre. To such a group as this the theatre presented itself as something of a social adventure. All its difficulties were simply spurs to endeavor, whets to ingenuity. Many in the group had already tasted the joys of the theatre. The others were social idealists of one type or another. To all of them the project spelt another opportunity in creation.

Their zeal was that of the artist spurred with the discovery of a new world. There were radicals from the Rand School of Social Science who had proudly been the first to present Dunsany's "The Glittering Gate." One had been a critic and had had a play done at the Princess—house of scandals and shockers—and had acted in Strindberg's "Pariah." Two were English actors. One had been with Ames. One was a patent attorney with leanings toward the box-office. One of the women was an actress who had wearied of the limitations of her profession. Another woman was an accomplished press agent. All had read plays, written plays, and either acted plays, produced them or dreamed of doing so. Thus in this first group there were the workers, there was the will, and there was the vision.

So the idea of a theatre was born. They had seen enough of these efforts to know that if they started they must keep on. There must be no turning back. And so they projected their theatre, their purpose being "to establish a stage for experimentation, to put it at the disposal of competent authors and producers who might have something vital to contribute, to put into execution swiftly and without undue regard to hamper-

ing detail any artistic idea that seemed worthy of trial."

Difficulties began at once. As the little hall which had been promised to them was lost through delay in organizing they took an abandoned stable in 133 McDougall Street and proceeded to make it over into a little theatre. With the first steps in building began the course of training of the young enthusiasts. They ran in rapid succession against all the laws framed by the city to protect its citizens against the schemes of the reformer. Fire laws, police laws, laws for the framing of licenses were faced and successively satisfied. By the time they had the last law quieted the landlady of the stable turned against them. Another law had popped up and had made her apprehensive. So 133 McDougall Street was given up. The middle of the season was at hand and there was no theatre.

About this time the attention of the crowd was called to a venture up town. On East 57th Street stood a little theatre called the Adolf Phillip Theatre, seating only a few hundred and for long a burden to the owners. In December, 1914, the New York Play Actors, Incorporated, had taken this little theatre, renamed it the Bandbox and announced the opening of a professional

engagement on high art principles in Jerome K. Jerome's "Poor Little Thing" from the French of Jules Lemaître. The venture, a worthy one in all respects, had been well received by the critics, but had died for want of support. Meanwhile, too, the Punch and Judy Theatre had been launched and was sailing in choppy seas. Audiences apparently had not yet learned to come to the little theatres.

Nothing daunted the Washington Square group, now homeless and with an opening announced for a week or two ahead, turned to the unlucky Bandbox Theatre as to their salvation. They were able to make advantageous terms for the theatre for Friday and Saturday nights of each week for the remainder of the season. They continued rehearsals on their list of plays, made renewed attack upon their little group of friends, announced their opening, and named a popular price, fifty cents. At the outset it was understood that no one in the company was to be paid, that all income was to be used for support, and that, whatever happened, their first season was to be completed. As to plays they stated in their prospectus that they intended to do "realistic, romantic, and frivolous plays." Plays by Americans were to be preferred in order to encourage native writ-

ers, but foreign plays were always to be acceptable. New ideas in stage direction and decoration were to be welcomed.

There was quaking in a dozen pairs of shoes as the plays, which had been selected for production in a theatre holding a hundred and before a club of friends, began to approach production in a theatre seating three hundred of the general public. The first production was made February 19, 1915. When they opened the theatre the house was sold out for the first performance, almost sold out for the second performance, and three tickets were sold for the following Friday. After the first performance everything was sold out and continued to be sold out for the remainder of the season. On the part of the critics the Players were immediately recognized for having provided "the most novel theatrical opening ever seen in the city." Among the points stressed in the first criticisms were the freedom from commercialism, the simplicity and "wistful unreality," the sincerity and humanity, the freedom from theatricalism of the playing. The Washington Square Players had come at the proper time. Not only were they ready for the city but the city was ready for them.

The remainder of this first season and the sub-

sequent history of the Washington Square Players may be rapidly summarized in order that we may get to the salient points in our critique. In their first season the Players rendered forty-three performances of fourteen one-act plays. Of these ten were American plays. They charged fifty cents admission, paid no salaries nor royalties and came out even at the end. Rent during the first season was low. The second season opened October 4, 1915, in the Bandbox Theatre, which the Players now rented for $8000 for the entire season. They now had twenty-five people in their group. Beginning with six performances a week they raised their prices to the one dollar standard, and paid some salaries. For this season they promised to subscribers five productions during a season covering thirty weeks. Business began slowly this season but increased with the second bill and their success was such that at the end of the season they were again ready to expand.

In April, 1916, it was announced that the Players would give up the Bandbox Theatre and come down town to the Comedy Theatre near Broadway. They first undertook a summer engagement beginning June 5, in a repertory of successes. The response not being encouraging they

closed to open again in the Comedy Theatre in the fall. They reopened with multiplied obligations. The rental of the Comedy was $32,000 for the bare building. To this had to be added license and those other features which are included in rent under the share system. A building opposite was taken for headquarters, workshops, and a school. A company was sent on tour with a selection from the repertory. The active group now numbered about one hundred. In spite of increased expenses the year was encouraging to the directors. The standard of admission was set at two dollars and under.

The third season ran through until May and then began a summer engagement in two old favorites and one new play. Throughout the three seasons the Players have kept faith with their subscribers, giving five complete bills a season for the last two seasons and several extra productions as well. In three seasons they have presented 47 one-act plays and three long plays, "Aglavaine and Selysette," "The Sea Gull" and "Ghosts."

The Washington Square Players are the first company starting with the express purpose of presenting plays "not otherwise seen in the professional theatre" that has been able to compete

with the professional theatre and keep alive. What are the reasons for their success? They have run throughout on the theory of the coöperation of the artists. The basis of association has always been voluntary work. They have continued this principle up to the present. Though to-day a large number of the workers, business staff, technical staff, and some dozen of the actors are paid, the ideal of free will service is still in force. Their continued life was dependent on this principle.

The company has proceeded on the theory of a continual capitalization of its accumulated assets. To change the figure they have pyramided their gains. Never going beyond a sane valuation of the ground already gained they have believed that every position successfully taken justifies and obligates a further advance. They believe that there is an increasingly large public for their wares. I think that in very great measure it is the fact that they are always on tiptoe for advance that has helped them. Not for them conservatism, or hanging back, or the counsels of fear. Every success was a contract signed for a future success. If they had stopped for a moment they would have fallen. Of course there is another side to this that one sees very clearly.

But at present I am dealing with the Players as a success.

The Washington Square Players began with the idea that the public should come to their theatre; their theatre would not seek out the public, and they have maintained this position. It is for this I think that I respect them most. They have held that the right and obligation rests upon the artist to do what he wants to do, the thing that at the time is necessary for his expression and his growth. They believe that only in this way can they give the audiences fresh and creative works. Of course this does not mean that all their plays have been good and well selected. They were limited in selection by what was offered and they made some mistakes, I suppose. But they have had eyes where many another has been blind and they do not apologize for their selections. Above all the box office has never been consulted. And that has been very good for the box office.

These are matters of broad principle. In some narrower matters of policy and administration their management has been worthy of study. As a nucleus of support they have kept themselves in close and sincere relationship with a group of subscribers. This group, which has grown gradu-

ally, has now become the backbone of the organization of which the company itself is the head. Not supplying a large amount of money it places into the hands of the company a fund of about $10,000 to see them through the season. This provides a little more than $1500 per production, precisely the amount we have seen is spent for a production by the Neighborhood Players. The subscribers pay for the production. The rest of the expenses must be paid from the takings in at the box office.

Some principles of company government will repay attention. A dramatic company differs from others in that it is both a social and an art enterprise. As a social enterprise it demands the instrumentalities of organization, committee management, centralized control and responsibility. As an art it requires singleness of direction and individuality of initiative. How to combine these things is a question. Needless to say they cannot be combined perfectly. Human nature is not so made. The Washington Square Players are not different from any other human beings. Of course there have been defections from the ranks. But as a rule there has been a careful adaptation of distributed forces to a single

aim. For this as for so much else in the organization credit has to be given to the real genius of the director, Edward Goodman.

Perhaps it may properly be said that the system followed by the Players is the protection of the individual director by a committee. The committee is not in authority over him. It is buffer for him. It is eyes and fingers and functions for him. Of course it is not so officially. Officially he is the creature of the committee. But the only way in which the machine will run well is for the director to be left free to operate his idea through the detailing and testing processes of the committee. This is shown in the case of the reading and the production of plays. Naturally one man cannot read all nor can he produce all. So they are read by a reader first and the possible plays only are turned over to the director. But his choice is always surveyed by the committee and no play is produced upon which the committee will not agree. And no one man can produce all the plays any more than he could act in all of them or create the sets. All the work of the Players is delegated. Each worker looks back to the group that is typified by the director. But he himself is delegated.

A few points in connection with the plays

may be worth mentioning. The theatre started out with the idea of doing the inaccessible things, the things that pique the interest and do not insult the intelligence. In making a repertory there are many considerations, 1st, the Ideal; 2nd, the Necessity; 3d, the Strategy. The first is what one would do if he kept his eye only on the play itself. The Necessity is what one does dictated by one's means and the pressure of the audience. The Strategy is what one does to put the ideal over in view of the Necessity. The best strategy is often no strategy for it sometimes happens that the ideal goes over of itself. But not always.

On the side of the ideal the Washington Square Players have stood sponsor for two kinds of plays particularly. These are new American plays and the best examples of the recent drama of Europe. They have done surprisingly good work in producing both classes. Necessity has operated with the Players only in one respect as touching their plays, and that has been a very fortunate respect. The one-act play, excellent as it is, represented necessity to them in three ways, in adaptability to the scope of the authors; in adaptability to the scope of the actors; and in comparative cheapness of production.

When we come to strategy Mr. Goodman will

not admit that it had any part in the selection of the plays. I beg to suggest that there must have been at any rate some unconscious strategy in both the choice and placing of plays. In addition to the one-act play representing necessity, it also opened the door for strategy in handling an evening's appeal to the audience. It has made it possible to provide variety, not to place all the eggs in one dramatic basket. It made possible the arranging of a bill from two points of view, the floating of the comparatively unpopular item on a bill between the more popular members, and the providing of a balance of type. This has been partly a mechanical matter, the balancing of a kitchen with a fancy set, of satire with serious plays, of American with foreign plays. Aside from this there is no doubt that some numbers on bills have been chosen with conscious levity. It probably wasn't difficult to decide what the audience would want, though naturally the director makes no confessions on this point. A little wily placing of what the audience would want over against something that the director himself wanted has saved for the Washington Square Players many a beautiful piece of work. It is for the strategy that contrived a hearing for these

things as well as for the insight that I am thankful to the Players.

I will end by naming an asset and a danger of the Players. The asset is their youth, their ingenuity, their responsibility only to themselves. These things, combined with a rather fascinating common-sense that I find in them, have brought them to where they are. They will carry them further if the danger doesn't eventuate. The danger represents the one point at which they have surrendered to the temptations of the commercial method. It has to do with the large rent they have to pay to play down town. For my part I would rather see them pay less and make their audiences seek them out. There is no doubt that they would do it.

XI

NEW IDEAS OF CIRCUIT

Some day a new Declaration of Independence will be written and three thousand miles of the American map will arise and say to an island cupped in the Atlantic seaboard, "I am." And Manhattan will thereafter be a little more respectful and considerate of the demands of the country outside. Such, at any rate, is the vision of some of the wise men of the West before they too journey to the East and bow before the temples of power.

I am not going to add to the total of discussion on "the collapse of the one-night stand," and on the melancholy effect of the overlordship of New York on the theatre of the country. I refrain, not because the condition is not serious but because in very few respects does it differ from the general conditions implied in this book and against which the insurgent theatres have directed their forces. Cities outside of New York have been the first noticeably to suffer from the

present false régime of the stage. But they have not actually suffered any more than New York has. The same stagnation of ideas, the same dry rot of the imagination that has followed in the train of the commercial system has found expression everywhere, in the village and in the metropolis. But it has expressed itself in different ways. In the great centres it has meant the multiplying of theatres and attractions to lure the greatest number. In the smaller places it has meant the withdrawing of the occasional good attraction in favor of the third or fourth company of some Broadway success or in favor of the ubiquitous motion picture. The insurgent theatres have set themselves to the solution of the problem in the small cities as well as in the large. Outside New York they have tried to fill a place too long vacant, to build up in the people of small centres an interest in the theatre as a healthy thing. In New York they have had to compete in a field already overcrowded, to introduce ingeniously the truer method in a field in which false methods had become the rule.

The faults of centralized control and the travelling company have become so manifest that many have supposed that the fault was inherent in the system, that no company could be good and serv-

iceable that travelled out from New York. Of course that is not the case. The travelling company controlled from a centre is perfectly justifiable if it supports the better order of the art of the stage in acting, production, play and stage economics. And there is no reason why it should not support this better order except the reasons that lie in narrow and destructive self-interest. There are indeed positive advantages for the art of the stage in the system of the travelling company over the systems of the local repertory and stock companies. These never can and never will become so strong as to represent the latest currents of dramatic art. They cannot provide the variety of motive and type our people demand. The travelling company could be a guarantee that the best of the nation is brought to the door of each one of its sections. The advantages of economy and efficiency of the travelling system are many and proper.

Why then has a system based upon travelling companies been responsible for so many of the evils under which the provinces have been suffering? Again we find our answer in expense and profits and the crux of the whole matter is property interests. Ninety-nine out of every hundred theatres in the country are now either owned out-

right or controlled by one or another of two New York theatre interests. By these interests theatres are handled upon very clear and simple principles. The management of a chain of theatres is largely a matter of bookkeeping. First, there is a certain small number of first-rate attractions that can be fed out to these theatres to extract the maximum of return. The time is then filled in with duplicate companies of New York successes, with cheap road companies in musical comedy, and with melodrama. The time that is left can be very profitably used by motion pictures. By careful studying of balance sheets it has been discovered in just what manner the road theatre will pay the greatest returns. No room is left in the programmes of these theatres for innovations and high-brow experiments. Only occasionally are these profitable and, worse than this, they clog the machine and promise to be troublesome later on. There is only one manager of a string of theatres in the country who is consistently friendly to the venturesome spirits of the new theatre. The others exclude them until they have come in by a side entrance, which means until their enterprises show sure and generous profits.

As we are trying not to deal with the impossi-

ble in this book I am going to admit at the outset that there is no way of overcoming this property control in the theatre. If it cannot be overcome it must be eluded. If you are a manager with a new idea for the presentation of artistic plays,—any manager mentioned in this book with the exception of Ames,—you will have trouble getting time in the theatres. If for one reason or another you are intent on taking your plays over the country you will probably try to invent a system of your own by which this may be done without dependence on the machinery of the established theatre. This is precisely what has been done.

The problem goes back to two questions. Where shall we play and where shall we get the local machinery for the spread of information and the sale of tickets? The last ten years have seen some interesting answers to these questions. For they have seen certain substitutes, college campuses, town halls, chapels, drawing-rooms, take the place of theatres, and clubs, colleges and leagues take the place of the local machinery.

Ben Greet had a large share in showing us that we are not absolutely dependent either upon theatres or the machinery of theatrical publicity for the support of productions. In England the

custom of playing in town halls and village greens was never quite lost. Some of the best English stock companies, Benson's for example, have maintained only the most delicate relation with the professional theatre. Their real support lay in the civic and social institutions of the provinces.

When Ben Greet came out of England with "Everyman" he proceeded to throw its support on the shoulders of new institutions. He recognized the interest this play had for students of literature and so he appealed to colleges to support it and they did so. He had presented "Everyman" first at a college hall. And with this play he first definitely aligned the universities of this country with the machinery of guarantee and support of theatrical enterprises. The significance of this innovation cannot be overestimated. His next step after creating the college support was to leave the established theatres and play Shakespeare and the old comedies on the campuses of the colleges. Thus was the new system of circuit introduced.

The system inaugurated by Ben Greet was taken up and pushed to completeness in this country by C. D. Coburn. It was he who first visualized the situation and the opportunity. Ten

years ago he outlined a system which has meant the establishing of the theatrical circuit upon the basis of the institutions and understandings of educated people. The thing came to Coburn first in the form of the problem of the artist. How was the artist to secure that variety in training and that independence in production that was necessary to him? The way was closed in stock and on Broadway. After Mr. and Mrs. Coburn had had several years' experience in stock companies the solution came to them through a few productions given in the open-air. "Why not organize the colleges, in which the dramatic interest was strong but unfused and futile, into a University Theatre Association?" Coburn wrote a pamphlet for this, he lectured and sent out agents, and succeeded in enlisting a few colleges. The colleges were to supply the machinery, the students and college community were to supply the audience, and the theatre was to be on the campus or in a college hall. The entrée to the colleges was secured through Percy MacKaye's "Canterbury Pilgrims" which was interesting to colleges on account of its association with Chaucer. The first summer they played in nine colleges. Summer by summer the number grew and as the circuit grew the repertory grew

as well. This was always taken from the works of Shakespeare or other classical dramatists. Then, in 1911, Gilbert Murray's "Electra" from Euripides was added.

Mr. Coburn counts the advantages of this system of circuit to be many-sided. It has provided for the colleges excellent productions of great plays in beautiful natural surroundings. For the stage it has represented the persistence of the tradition of the classical play. For the artist it has provided an opportunity to train himself in the way Irving and Booth were trained, in the masterpieces of the world's drama.

The circuits of the colleges have been built only by soul-trying energy on the part of central offices. As first outlined Mr. Coburn thought of a self-governing federation but this idea proved impracticable. As time has passed the lines of the circuit have been drawn together until today there is in the Middle States a solid and growing constituency. People are learning to look apart from the theatre for some of their best theatrical fare. Moreover there is being trained a set of local agencies for the handling of these productions. It does not require a very rich imagination to see in the not distant future a theatrical edifice for travelling companies built upon a

better foundation than that of short-sighted profits.

Within the last two years there has been worked out another ingenious scheme for outwitting the disadvantages of touring in classical and new-idea plays. So successful was this venture that its originator found himself immediately welcome upon the stages for which his own platforms had been provided as substitutes. Like C. D. Coburn, Stuart Walker is a trained showman with an artist's itch to do what pleases himself and to keep growing. While Coburn attaches himself to the classical codes Walker has allied himself with the newer fashions of stage art. But his problem was the same. How was he to get an opportunity to try these things out and to make them support themselves? Walker had had enough experience with astute managers to know that the best entrance to the theatre is the side door, so he proceeded to find one.

I should say that Walker's chief quality in the theatre is a playful and childlike art. His are not children's plays but that rudimentary brand by which the true principle of art is distinguished from its more sophisticated show; fancy in production, by which all the factors of the produc-

tion, stage, scenery, costumes, story, and lights, are handled by the free imagination of the producer instead of by the principles of imitation. And Walker's chief passion was lights. There had been much talk about lights on the stage but there were few artists of lights and few good lighting systems. Walker wished to make himself a master of these things.

Now there was no more an open door at the manager's office for this sort of thing than there was for Shakespeare and Molière and Euripides. And so, as the theatres were closed, Walker thought of a little substitute by which he could have all the satisfaction of experiment with little expense. I do not know that he knew of the little portable stages that have been carried around in England, nor of M. Gémiér's portable theatre in France which was hauled around by a traction engine. At any rate his portmanteau stage was something of an adaptation of what had been and was even more largely original, being enriched by the principles of the new staging, by the builder's own fancy, and by a very complete lighting system. This little stage was set up on July 14th, 1915, in Christadora Settlement House, 147 Avenue B, in three little plays of the manager's own composition.

Here was another expedient for the new circuit. As Greet and Coburn had found theirs in the open-air, Walker found his in a little extensible box, "a theatre that comes to you," perfectly equipped as a stage, which could be set up anywhere, in drawing rooms, in halls, or on the stages of theatres. The success of the first performance opened up the next opportunity for circuit. In referring to Walker's success with his little collapsible stage I am disposed to give a large share of credit to the managers who set themselves to work to create for him a circuit. Messrs. Elser and Janney had before them the work that had been done by others in creating collegiate circuits. But in large measure these were not available. They had to build up new circuits from the ground. Taking clubs, drama league centres and colleges as a nucleus they gathered together local groups and then knit these with each other for the purposes of a continuous tour. This is work that cannot be scamped. Sometimes it was necessary that the advance man see and talk personally with a hundred people in a day enlisting interest, explaining, justifying and persuading. I mention this side of the work in order to show that this is one necessary and difficult feature in the building of new circuits. However

excellent the company may be its value counts for nothing if this engineering work is neglected.

A short season the first year, a longer and successful season the second year in plays by Dunsany, Walker and others, showed what might be done with this idea. The guarantee system of local support had abundantly proved itself. It supplied not only the sinews of money, but it provided as well a group in each city of friendly and helpful people who had informed themselves on the facts of the undertaking and were prepared to be pleased. Coburn and Walker have proved other advantages in this system. It has been found possible to give excellent productions at a far lower expenditure of money than is usual on the professional stage. As the productions represent a new idea at the centre of which lies art rather than profits audiences have been glad to respond to the imaginations of the producers in staging. And these have brought out some really remarkable examples of beauty and economy. The natural harmonies of the open air, the possibilities of beauty in lighted horizon cloths and painted draperies have been fully utilized and to the complete satisfaction of the audiences.

The door thus opened by these experimenters is an important one. It should not be closed.

The idea with which Coburn started in his University Theatre was a large and true idea. There are institutions in existence which should be of broader service to the theatre than they have been. This obligation rests particularly on the educational institution. For the sake of their own patrons, as well as in the service of their purpose in society, they will need to take a larger part in the support, financial and critical, of the better efforts in the theatre. Since the Coburns started other institutions have entered the field. The Drama League has it in its power through its local centres to be of the greatest service in arranging guaranteed tours for companies that are resolutely doing good things. Lately the Lyceum Bureaus, always ready to recognize a new trend, have entered the field. What is needed is an organization which will take off the hands of each company the necessity of building up its own organization. For this the Drama League is well equipped mechanically if not in temper. For such an organization to be the outgrowth of the educational systems of the country would mean a great deal both to schools and drama. And it would throw in the way of some of the newer circuiting companies assistance that would greatly aid in their work.

XII

THE NEW ADVENTURE

THERE has been more in these new theatres scattered over the country than appears on the surface. To many they have offered the zest of new adventure, of wayfaring in social experiment. The difficulties themselves stirred the interest, and the fact that there was no purpose of utility was a source of satisfaction. More than anything else these theatres provided activity which was its own justification and its own reward. After years of good intentions there was real pleasure in forgetting destinations for awhile and simply doing.

The first group of the little theatres came about 1911 and 1912. The second and larger crop came three years later in 1915. The second group depended upon all that had been learned of the pioneers. In the establishment of the later theatres there has been put forth a great deal of sound sense. We do not find young men and women again attacking the tremendous problems

that fascinated the beginners. And there has come into the work a group who have had better tuition. Men of professional training who before despised the little theatres are now glad to enter their service. The graduates of the earlier organizations have gone out to take leading places in the new. And several have come back to America after work in Berlin and Moscow and Florence.

It is strange how rapidly the sanction for this sort of thing grew. Soon it became possible to admit you were interested in the new ideas of the theatre without seeming to be a fool or a social highwayman. And the resources rapidly increased. Every city found numbers of actors well enough equipped, some artists who were willing to turn their hands to the new art, and some experienced directors. Playwrights who had needed but the slightest encouragement began to turn out novel little plays for home consumption.

In respect of organization the later theatres have learned from the pioneers. When these theatres started the whole thing may have gone back to some individual, self-elected, with the command upon him. Through faults of his temperament and also through the misfortunes of his

position as pioneer that individual was seldom able to maintain an organization. We have seen that success has come to some organizations through their ability to put up a united face to the community. Just as surely failure has come without that ability. The newer societies learned from the pioneers how to secure this united front. They learned that however important it was to have a director with ideals and vision it was quite as important to have a committee management to represent him before the community. It has become axiomatic that no individual can stand alone in this business. The attempt to do so breaks the back every time. Society has a cruel if efficacious way of testing the stamina of those who would be her instruments.

The means by which this mass backing is secured differs in different places. Sometimes the theatre attaches itself to a social institution already established. In this way in 1916 the Brooklyn Institute was used as the paternal organization for the founding of the Brooklyn Repertory Theatre. Universities and art institutes have lent their strength for this purpose in some cases. By all odds the best organization for this use is one which has already been busying itself in the activities of applied art. To this class

belongs the very vigorous and promising theatre of the Arts and Crafts Guild of Detroit. This theatre has been so carefully thought out, it has been so fortunate in its associations and support that it warrants careful consideration.

In 1915 Mr. Sam Hume was called to Detroit to direct the opening production in an open-air theatre built on the estate of Mr. George C. Booth. Out of the Cranbrook Masque prepared by Mr. Hume for this theatre developed an association between Mr. Hume and the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts which is in many respects the most promising in the recent movements for local theatres. These promising features refer to a combination of circumstances, chief of which were the history of Mr. Hume and the purpose of the Society. Mr. Hume had been a California man, a student at Harvard under Baker, and later a worker with Craig in Florence. All along a diligent student of the new staging he had been responsible for that exhibition of the new stagecraft which had introduced this art to America. He was now ready for such a call as the Society of Arts and Crafts would make.

On its side this Society was a vigorous, well-established and supported organization of craftsmen and artists then in its tenth year. It had long

carried on some work in historic costume, design and setting, and was now ready for a more particular work. Out of the association between the Society and Mr. Hume there first came a little theatre seating two hundred or more which was turned over by friends rent free to the theatre of the Arts and Crafts Society for its work. The first year's work was carefully organized according to principles worked out by the director. Mr. Hume holds strictly to the idea of the reduction of factors to their simplest terms. In his first statement he made this clear. "We believe it wiser to start with the demand, and let our organization and number of performances expand as the demand increases, rather than to begin with the imagined demand which would leave us at the end of the season with a debt." Again he says, "I do not look upon the Little Theatre as a laboratory where a few people work out their own personal and usually very queer and highly specialized ideas, but a theatre which, to justify its existence, must establish some definite point of contact with community life."

The management of the theatre has been based closely on these principles. Two performances are scheduled for each play. If more perform-

ances are demanded this demand must be clearly shown. Work in the theatre is entirely voluntary. There is no expense for salaries outside the director's fee. The audience is made up at present of 400 subscribers who have engaged themselves for a certain sum. Costumes and settings are made at the theatre in connection with the workshops of the Arts and Crafts Society. Indicating the scrupulous economy practiced it may be noticed that each production is made at an average cost of $800 as compared with the cost per production of $1500 for the Neighborhood Playhouse and the Washington Square Players.

Though himself an actor and writer Mr. Hume's chief interest lies in the design side of the stage, and his theatre shows up better on this side than in its list of plays. The repertory, though interesting, is not distinguished. But this cannot be said of the settings. Hume's handling under different patterns of set pilons on the stage, his treatment of symbolical and light effects are among the most practical and at the same time imaginative specimens of the new staging art in America.

I know no other case of a theatre so fortunate as the Detroit Theatre of Arts and Crafts for as-

sociation with an artist's guild. Most other theatres have to create their own supporting organizations and to draw together for themselves the artists who will make the productions. But if the organization must be made to order I can imagine no greater source of strength than to have this limited to those who take part, to have no governing machinery or committees representing mere administration, and to expect no support and to permit no interest except upon the part of those who were drawn together by delight in the thing being done. This principle limits the civic and business activities of the enterprise but it conduces to good work.

We have heard a great deal about joy in art and the play motive. The advantage of these is that they are free and that they are without purpose. Impelled perhaps by reaction against the mean utility of the professional stage, a utility that has destroyed the imagination throughout its fabric, and as much by a reaction against the intense purposefulness of many reform movements, some organizations have come together simply as playing groups of artists. There is a self-sufficiency about these that is refreshing. They make no appeal to audiences, they do not advertise, in many cases they make it as difficult

as possible to secure tickets. But their independence proves an asset for them.

Among players of this type by all odds the most successful are the Provincetown Players. They are successful simply because they are individual, free, and not anxious; because they do all the work themselves and are satisfied when they have pleased themselves. These players find their justification in their own faith and impulse. They have played one season in a little private theatre in Washington Square, and they show no present signs of going up town to appeal to the many. In this season they did twenty-four new plays, many of which were distinguished by idea and some few approached excellence as plays.

Of somewhat the same order are the Vagabond Players of Baltimore who opened November 2, 1916, in a little theatre seating sixty-two made out of a former bar-room in the St. James Hotel. In the first season fifteen plays were given. All expenses were covered by playing twice a week with a new bill every month.

The Little Playhouse Theatre of St. Louis is something like the Detroit theatre on account of its association with an artists' guild, though in this case the bonds of association are very slight. The St. Louis Little Playhouse, directed by Clin-

ton J. Masseck and Melville Burke, was organized to produce plays in 1916 under a supporting organization called the St. Louis Society for the Promotion of Drama. After an unfortunate opening in some highly intense plays of the earlier styles of the modern theatre movement this theatre fell into its stride and promises an interesting career.

One of the older of the little theatres of the country is the one managed under the Little Theatre Society of Indiana. This theatre society was established in 1914 at about the time the patronage idea was strong among the little theatres. On its governing board it has had some of the best known names of Indiana's art and literature. It has been well provided with subscribers and sustaining members. No city in the country is better equipped for the support of such an organization. But the little theatre has fallen short through the fact that it has been too heavily administered, that it has failed to draw together a voluntary group of artists, and has not always had responsible direction. The theatre has no home, its performances having been given in the John Herron Art Institute and in scattered auditoriums. The repertory gives an appearance of accident and confusion.

Los Angeles has had several experiences with little theatres and none of these has been fortunate. In December, 1913, a professional stock company was called together under the title the Little Theatre. As the company was an expensive one the venture hardly lasted two months. In the fall of 1916 Miss Aline Barnsdall gathered together a good company in which Richard Ordynski was a leading figure. An expensive production was made of Ossip Dymow's "Nju" with which Ordynski's connection with the theatre ceased. After a few weeks of further experiment this theatre also closed its doors. Neither one of these was a little theatre in the proper sense of the word, and under the conditions of expense with which they started there was no possibility of success. After leaving the Little Theatre of Los Angeles Ordynski produced "Everyman" in that city under other auspices, and then returned to New York for a short engagement at the Bandbox in Dymow's play, which was no more successful in New York than it had been in the West.

Some of these new theatres follow the system of the old amateur clubs in organization while presenting the newer and experimental plays. Such is the Kansas City Comedy club under the

direction of Marcus Ford. For a record of activity we can find little to excel that of the Players of Providence, Rhode Island. This club is a successor to the famous old amateur club of that city, the Talma Club, the record of whose performances goes back to 1887. The number of the plays presented by the Talma Club reached over a hundred. The Players were established in 1909 and until the sale of their theatre played in the private Talma Theatre. In eight seasons they have given 92 regular performances of 53 different plays including many of the strategic plays of the modern movement.

Active theatres are found to-day in cities all over the country. The Little Theatre Players of Denver were established in 1915 under the direction of Granville F. Sturgis, who had also been active in little theatre work in Los Angeles. After a company had been opened in Cincinnati in 1913 and had discontinued for want of support Mrs. Helen Schuster-Martin in 1915 began work in a larger way by providing a building and a corps of efficient helpers. This Little Playhouse has now been in existence two seasons and has prospered in good plays. In addition to the Playhouse of the Wisconsin Players Milwaukee had for some years a little theatre under the direction

of Mrs. J. A. Stewart. In 1916 there was promised a little theatre building for Cleveland. As a result of a change of plans an old church has been remodelled for a home for the Cleveland Little Theatre. The most distinctive work done for this group under the direction of Mr. Eugene O'Neill has been in puppet plays.

As far back as November 17, 1914, the local centre of the Drama League of Duluth had opened a little theatre building of its own. In this theatre there have been for each season an average of six little theatre productions under a good local company expertly managed by Mrs. F. A. Patrick and other capable workers. A little theatre that promised good things for a small city was the Prairie Playhouse opened at Galesburg, Illinois, in 1915 by Mr. Jesse Crafton. Probably no theatre in a small town has attacked with more wisdom and idealism the peculiar problems of its position than did this little theatre during its first two seasons. Another little theatre in a small town has been Mr. George McCallum's private theatre in Northampton, Mass. Mr. McCallum has expended money on this in the same way that other men have spent money on first editions and pictures. He engaged an art director

and spared no pains in securing the most exquisite beauty in his productions.

The list of little theatre companies could be indefinitely prolonged and still I should miss some. In January, 1917, Mr. William B. Button organized the Little Theatre Players of Rochester, New York. Little theatres are conducted or have been projected at Nashville, Erie, Richmond Hill, Brownsville, Portland (Oregon), East Orange, Salt Lake City, and Pittsburgh. In New York there was for a time the promise of the Nine O'Clock Theatre, most dainty of small theatres; there are the Morningside Players who come out of Columbia University, the East and West Players with a programme of Yiddish plays; and the Bramhall Theatre, exponent of the work of one man.

This latter institution commands a respectful consideration, little as I am able to place it. It has in it all the flavor of a personal adventure on the part of its director, Butler Davenport. Like some of the earlier and less successful ventures in theatrical pioneering the Bramhall Theatre depends upon the crusading spirit in one man. And that man provides an unusual combination of qualities. Many of these have in them more of

the American stamp than the usual run of qualities that have led to little theatres in this country. With these qualities Davenport has endowed his little theatre, a New England Americanism, almost a Colonial intensity of purpose, a business acumen capable of supporting an expensive venture for unselfish ends, a thorough knowledge of the situation of the theatre, as well as an expert management of all of its factors.

Mr. Davenport began this work about 1912 when he erected on his estate near Stamford a theatre dedicated to new American plays. He says that only accidentally did he become a playwright, through his desire to find plays of a certain truthful type. In 1915 he built himself a theatre in 27th Street, New York, which is a model of all the tiny theatre building should be. This he has been quietly conducting ever since. In plays Mr. Davenport clings to the play of "theme," this usually derived from a well-observed American characteristic. In acting and conducting he depends upon a beautiful naturalism. I can find some fault with his plays and his system of organization, but I can find no fault with his acting or with his productions.

I name no further theatres not because they do not exist but because I must stop somewhere. It

has not been my purpose to iterate the details but to attempt to give some background for movements that may have appeared tangled. So I can say nothing of the often promised Irish Theatre of America, of the Woman's National Theatre, of the projected American People's Theatre, of the new Sylvan Theatre lately completed in Washington as the first theatre of any type maintained on its own grounds by the government of the United States, or of the Forest Theatre at Carmel-by-the-Sea. In the spring of 1917 there comes the announcement of the Greenwich Village Theatre in New York City. Carefully studied in plan, with the promise of a good building and good facilities, the venture offers some hope of success.

XIII

ART AND OUTLOOK

WILL the insurgent theatre last? Do you approve of its plays? What about the acting? Should scenery dominate? These are questions one continually meets in considering the recent events in the theatre. Perhaps all the questions are involved in the first, for plays, acting, and scenery are but parts of the general idea for which the insurgent theatre has stood, not to be defended by themselves but as factors of a larger whole.

One thing is certain, and this answers as well those who ask whether the insurgent theatre is against professionalism on the stage. The theatre like everything else tends to order. The insurgent movements have not been against order. They have not been in favor of slipshod methods, poor acting, bad balance of the parts to the whole, puerile plays. They have accepted these and many other disadvantages, such as debts, and hard work and misunderstanding, as prices they had to pay for something that had to be done. No one

needs to think that any of the directors, however misguided he may have been, enjoyed bad acting and half-baked plays. But they enjoyed bad acting, if artistically impelled, better than "good" acting under the artificial conditions that had been forced on the actor. If in destroying the theatre they had to begin again at the beginning and build it up painfully through crudities and failure, experiment and adjustment, they were willing to do it.

And that is what they have been doing. They have never rested for one moment content with an imperfection. They could not do so if they would, the competition being so strong. They have been quick to use the dead bodies of their comrades as scaling stones, these young idealists. Let no one tell me that the impulse to money is the only driving power. We have seen enough of other impulses in the last five years. He must have been impatient indeed who could complain of the situation in these movements. For as fast as a fault was found someone would correct it. As fast as a new scheme was thought of a machine was created to exploit it. The theatre has not seen so much activity in years as the little theatres have provided.

And they have all been definitely tending

toward order. Will they call this new order professionalism? They may if they please for if it isn't professionalism the difference is only that between tweedledum and tweedledee. For order demands machinery and machinery is run by law. To serve the great mass of our people, whether you give them the new art or the old, requires organization, it requires the showman's instinct, that keen knowledge of the heart of men that makes one know them and serve them well. Let us only ask that they be served well, and it will make no difference whether by professional or not.

It has been by subjecting themselves to the tenets of order that the best of the new theatres have taken their leading positions. We have seen that some have been unable to stand the test of common sense. The theatre demands a better balance between the centrifugal and the centripetal forces than any other business. One needs to keep the "cosmic reach" and yet one mustn't fly off. The test may come in the form of a road tour, a new building, or the whisper of ambition in association with great powers. However it comes one needs to keep to the sane interpretation of his strength. The theatre that first finds its place, develops and magnifies this place, keeping

close hold always on its funded assets, yet reaching out always for the new is going to be of some service to the state.

One good result of the work of the insurgent theatres has been the extent to which their principles have been accepted on the commercial stage. We have seen many cases in which the insurgent theatres have been stepping stones to the best places in Broadway. C. D. Coburn came from the circuits which he had built and upon which he had based his training in classic repertory directly onto Broadway. B. Iden Payne was the director of an English insurgent company until he became a very busy producer of plays in New York. Robert E. Jones took but one step from unproduced experiment outside the theatre to produced success in the commercial theatre. The Washington Square Players and the Neighborhood Playhouse have sent productions from their own stages directly to the houses of the most unbending of commercial managers. I mention these things not as success but as evidences of success that had come before. In going into the professional theatre these people were taking along their ideas. Gone is the old fleer, the insurgent is the outsider. Today he is not discontent because he is an out-

sider; he is an outsider because he is discontent. And his discontent is a surer means of bringing him inside than another man's conformity.

Along with the influence from those who bring insurgency into the theatre is the influence from those who accept it. Mrs. Fiske, Arnold Daly, Mary Shaw always were insurgents within the theatre. They came at a time when the dirty work of insurgency had not been done by others. But Arthur Hopkins, Margaret Anglin, Faversham, Benrimo can today take without discomfort the results of the researches of other men outside the pale, and their prominent position on the stage shows that it has paid to do so.

Will the insurgent theatres become professional? Yes, if by professional you mean order and craftsmanship. No, if by professional you mean, as you have meant in the past, false order and artifice. This answer must be made to all idealists about the theatre. The theatre is a business. There is no plan by which it could be run other than as a business. The great men of the theatre have always been good business men. It is a business because it involves business features in the organization of workers and in the selling of wares. There is no way of getting harmony in a company and in a group of workers other than

by an efficient and common sense basis of management. Good-will counts for much, personality, fire, zeal, count for much, but justice to all, a system based on reason and economy and a due regard for the best interests of all are essential. The best feature of the Washington Square Players is the fact that they have been able to adapt their idealistic principles to a really efficient business organization.

No theatre can exist without its audience. And an audience cannot attach itself to a whimsical institution. The audience has to know that the institution is there rain or shine. It does not wish to be made aware of the machinery, but one thing it demands, absolute dependability in the machinery created for its service. This is no less true in the institution of entertainment than in transportation, no less true at a little theatre than at a circus.

The result is that every company that would live must adapt itself to the regulations of formality and organization. There comes the point when this is in fact professionalism. And just as inevitably there comes the time when expert acting, sane principles of staging, workmanlike plays follow as by the operation of natural law. All these things are in fact coming as the new theatres

find their codes and are able to adapt themselves to them.

As to the standards of acting and plays I grant that the playing at many little theatres has been faulty and that the plays have been half-done. I do not know how soon some turn of fate is going to change the face of the theatrical situation in America. But I am sure that none of the work that has been done has been lost, and that the faulty work has been hardly less valuable than the good work for the purpose in hand. The work remains in two ways, in records of deeds done, plays written and performed, in actors and producers instructed, in audiences stimulated, in books and plays printed; and it remains also in the contributions these movements have made to the sum total of thinking, and to the clearing of the channels of thought and communication between men. The movements remain in the more respectful attitude maintained toward the theatre by critics and workers in the busy world.

These things would not have started to be stopped half-way. The war is causing some unquiet hours here as in other affairs. The necessary back-fire of every movement has already begun to try men's faith in their works. But the lessons that have been learned will not be forgot-

ten. The theatre does belong to the people, in no demagogic sense, but honestly and sincerely. It is not a mystery or a thing of illusion and lies, or a drab or a procurer, or a mine to be milked of gold. It is a source of the great adventure of democracy by which artists who work in human nature study to body forth their vision of truth.

Some things have been discovered without peradventure of a doubt. Money is not a stimulus to work or to imagination in the theatre. Writers will compose and players will act for no money or little just so long as you let them build themselves into what they do. They will do it in the early days for fun or in devotion to a cause, and then—and this is important—as you support them in their work with your intelligence and your taste, they will do it regularly for an institution in which they believe and whose servants they will be. Money is not the specific. And as we discover this we find some codes upon which the theatre of the future may be built. Endow them, yes, but not with money until after you have endowed them with brains; not with resources until you have made them free to use those resources; not with a building until you have provided them an audience.

The artist is self-respecting, proud in the best

sense. In so far as he touches society at all he prefers to feel that he meets it in fair exchange. He wants nothing for nothing. The artist does not live who can do his best work under benefaction. Therein lies the fault of the subsidy system. It binds the artist at the very point at which he can least afford to be bound, in his reverence for himself. So the best theatre is that which most cuts its cloth to the true pattern of public support, not giving more than is paid for and not, as is so generally the case, less, but using the favor of men's understanding and support as a premise by which to push forward to new conclusions. The beauty of this is that it keeps the mind alert. It keeps one aware. And that is the secret of the art of the theatre.

The history of these days has been one of enthusiastic effort, the chief call being to do something or we die. It is true enough that very few knew what to do, or how to distinguish the true thing from the false. For this reason the early efforts offer a face of doubt, of mixed motives, or a strain of idealism mixed with a strange overreaching of self-interest, of careful programmes broken by tangled councils not only in committees but in the minds of directors. The trouble is no one knew exactly for what he was seeking. En-

thusiasms were plentiful but clear programmes were few.

The favorable side of this situation, which in some respects seemed to mean the setting of no standards at all in the place of standards frankly debased, was that through it all the young workers were learning where they were wrong, where they might be right next time, and that surely and not too slowly they were discovering a method to which some absolute principles of judgment might be applied. They were showing us in their own experience what Duse meant when she said, "To save the theatre the theatre must be destroyed."

In referring to the artists from whom the real impulse came the best credit must be given to the artists of design who a few years ago discovered the theatre. Of all artists they best had the fresh joy in work, the plunge of creativeness, the fraternal spirit that were needed in the theatre. When they discovered that their masses and drapes and colors were indeed dramatic, that they had in them the mysteries of motion and of time and of passion they turned to with a ready will. They brought to the theatre adventure, experiment and a fresh vision. They brought the playful spirit of the ateliers. Naturally in their first enthusiasm they tended to depress the scale to

their side. For awhile it has seemed that the picture was to be all of the play, the set more important than the story. But this is only temporary. As time goes on the pictorial artists will take their place in the full circle of the workers of the theatre without jealousy and without self-aggrandizement.

As for plays and players, the demand for an American art of the stage and an American drama, I am going to let others treat these questions when the record is a little further advanced. For my part I do not think we should talk very much about such things. The watched pot of a national literature doesn't boil. I think the little insurgent theatres have nothing to apologize for in these respects. They have had to create new material and they have had to infuse a new spirit; they could neither take the materials of the commercial stage nor could they find the material ready at hand apart from the stage. They had to make it. At the start there was little to recommend their work but the spirit. But after all that was the one thing needful. As time has gone on there has been added to the impulse to truth a certain firmness of hand and steadiness of vision.

All in all the theatre seems to me to be today in

the not unencouraging position of a young runner who for some time has been cantering about warming up and now bends over the tape ready and eager for a race against strong odds.

APPENDIX

PLAY LISTS OF THEATRES

THE NEW THEATRE. Chicago. 1906–7. Victor Mapes, *Director.*

Repertory: La Belle Sainara (d'Hervilly); Engaged (Gilbert); Marse Covington (Ade); The Great Galeoto (Echegaray); The Spoilers (Beach); The Goal (Jones); The Son-in-Law (Le Gendre de M. Poirier by Augier); Kerry (Boucicault); Elga (Hauptmann); Sweet Lavender (Pinero); Dora (Sardou); The Masquerade (Fulda); Margaret Fleming (Herne); The Whole World (S. M. Illsley).

THE ROBERTSON PLAYERS. Chicago. 1907–9. Donald Robertson, *Director.*

Repertory: The Miser (Molière); The Triumph of Youth (Pailleron); Rosmersholm (Ibsen); The Coming of Peace (Hauptmann); A Blot in the 'Scutcheon (Browning); The Intruder (Maeterlinck); In a Balcony (Browning); The Intruding Widow (Lamb); A Night in Avignon (Cale Young Rice); The Law (Sturges); The Gauntlet (Björnson); Keep Your Own Secret (Calderon); The Inspector (Gogol); Sigurd Slembe (Björnson); As the Leaves (Giacosa); A Curious Mishap (Goldoni); Madman or Saint (Echegaray); Comus (Milton); The Chaplet of Pan (Stevens and Rice); Rahab (Burton); The Prodigal (Voltaire); Zaragueta (Asa and Carrion); John Gabriel Borkman (Ibsen);

Miller of Boskobel (Garland); The Art of Life L. W. Smith); Torquato Tasso (Goethe); Tartuffe (Molière); Happiness in a Corner (Sudermann); The Mayor of Zalamaya (Calderon); The Critic (Sheridan); A Marriage (Björnson); The Postscript (Augier).

THE HULL HOUSE THEATRE. Chicago. Reorganized 1907. Laura Dainty Pelham, *Director.*

In the repertory there have been from 1907 to date 23 full length plays and 24 one-act plays. Important plays from Repertory: The Sad Shepherd (Jonson); Pillars of Society (Ibsen); The Silver Box, Justice, The Pigeon (Galsworthy); You Never Can Tell, The Devil's Disciple, Arms and the Man (Shaw); The Tragedy of Nan (Masefield); Grania, The Workhouse Ward, The Rising of the Moon, Spreading the News, Devorgilla (Gregory); Riders to the Sea (Synge); Rutherford and Son (Sowerby); Punishment (Bierstadt); The Magnanimous Lover, Mixed Marriage (Ervine).

THE CASTLE SQUARE THEATRE. Boston. 1908 to date. John Craig, *Director.*

A specimen of Stock Repertory, Jan. 5, 1914, to May 10, 1915: Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch, The "Mind the Paint" Girl, Hamlet, Hawthorne of U. S. A., All the Comforts of Home, The Great Ruby, Stop Thief! Where's Your Wife? The Girl of the Golden West, Mrs. Gorringe's Necklace, The Crisis, Soldiers of Fortune, The Charity Ball, Rip Van Winkle, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Officer 666, The Deep Purple, The Ghost Breaker, The Rejuvenation of Aunt Mary, The Man o' War's Man, The End of the Bridge, Baby Mine, Over Night, Broadway Jones, Kindling, Arizona, A Widow by Proxy, Graustark, The Ne'er-do-Well, Madame X,

Ready Money, The Thief, Paid in Full, Too Much Johnson, A Midnight Bell, The Bishop's Carriage, Secret Service, Snow White, Kindling, Common Clay (Harvard Prize Play, first production).

THE TALMA CLUB. Providence. 1909 to date. H. A. Barker, *Director.*

The repertory for seven seasons covers 43 plays, including: The Liars (Jones); The Marriage of Wit and Science; How He Lied to Her Husband (Shaw); The Merchant of Venice; The Importance of Being Earnest (Wilde); The Tyranny of Tears (Chambers); Cousin Kate (Davies); Her Husband's Wife, The Rainbow (A. E. Thomas); The Chinese Lantern (Housman); Prunella (Housman and Barker); The Neighbors (Gale); Mrs. Dane's Defense (Jones); The Witching Hour (Thomas); The Far Away Princess (Sudermann).

THE NEW THEATRE. New York. 1909–1911. Winthrop Ames, *Director.*

Repertory: Antony and Cleopatra; The Cottage in the Air (Knoblauch); Strife (Galsworthy); The Nigger (Sheldon); The School for Scandal (Sheridan); Don (Besier); Liz the Mother; Brand, one act (Ibsen); Twelfth Night; The Witch (H. Wiers-Jenssen, adapted by H. Hagedorn); A Song of the People (Sophus Michaelis, borrowed production); Sister Beatrice (Maeterlinck); Beethoven (René Fauchois); A Winter's Tale; The Blue Bird (Maeterlinck); The Merry Wives of Windsor; The Thunderbolt (Pinero); Mary Magdalene (Maeterlinck); Vanity Fair (dramatized by R. Hichens and C. Gordon-Lennox); The Piper (Marks); Nobody's Daughter (G. Paston); The Arrow Maker (Austin).

THE COBURN PLAYERS. New York. 1908 to date. C. D. Coburn, *Director.*

Repertory: Macbeth, Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Othello, Julius Cæsar, As You Like It, Twelfth Night, Merchant of Venice, A Comedy of Errors, Merry Wives of Windsor, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Taming of the Shrew, Much Ado About Nothing, The Tempest, Henry V, Richard III (Shakespeare); Electra, Iphigenia in Tauris (Euripides, translated by Gilbert Murray); The Imaginary Invalid (Molière); The Canterbury Pilgrims, Jeanne d'Arc, The Bird Masque, Chuck, The Antick, Sam Average (MacKaye).

THE DRAMA PLAYERS. Chicago. 1911–12. Donald Robertson, *Director.*

Repertory: The Lady from the Sea (Ibsen); The Learned Ladies (Molière); The Thunderbolt (Pinero); The Maternal Instinct (Herrick); The Passing of the Torch (Hervieu); Gold (Ancilla Hunter); The Stronger (Giacosa); The Coffee House (Goldoni); June Madness (Henry Kitchell Webster).

WISCONSIN DRAMATIC SOCIETY.

Madison Branch. 1911–1915. Thomas H. Dickinson, *Director.* Repertory: The Intruder (Maeterlinck); The Master Builder (Ibsen); The Hour Glass (Yeats); Glory of the Morning (Leonard); The Postscript (Augier); The Neighbors (Gale); Dust of the Road (Goodman and Stevens); Ryland (Stevens and Goodman); In Hospital (Dickinson); The Mistress of the Inn (Goldoni); The Book of Job (Adapt. by H. M. Kallen); The Two Mr. Wetherbys (Hankin).

Milwaukee Branch. 1911–1915. Laura Sherry, *Director.* Repertory: Riders to the Sea (Synge); The

Stronger (Strindberg); The Revolt (Adam); How He Lied to Her Husband (Shaw); Prunella (Housman and Barker); The Marriage of Sobeide (Hofmannsthal, trans. by B. Q. Morgan); The Feast of the Holy Innocents (Illsley); Tradition (Middleton); Just Livin' (Sherry).

The Toy Theatre. Boston. 1912–1915. Mrs. Lyman W. Gale, *Director.*

Repertory: Two Out of Time (O. Herford); In His House (Middleton); Press Cuttings (Shaw); The Wings (Marks); Between Engagements (Hedberg); Sire de Maletroit's Door (from Stevenson); The Cuckoo (Jeannette Marks); Caprice (Musset); Fo' Marse George (Sayward); Fealty (Starr); Miss Civilization (Davis); The Locked Door, pantomime (Briggs); Son Average l'Ecron Brise (Bordeaux); The Right to Happiness (Sudermann); Fritzchen (Sudermann); How He Lied to Her Husband (Shaw); The Confession (Shea); The Silent System (Dreyfuss); The Child in the House (Howard); The Literary Sense (Schnitzler); Uncle William's Lobster (Jeannette Lee); Hilarion (J. Nöel Carter); The Dark Lady of the Sonnets (Shaw); * Anatol (Schnitzler); * Creditors (Strindberg); * Joint Owners in Spain (Alice Brown); * The Trojan Women (Euripides); * By-Products (Patterson); * Catherine Parr (Baring); * Tradition (Middleton); War (Filmore); Magic (Chesterton); Across the Border (Dix); The Two Mr. Wetherbys (Hankin); * The Great Catherine, * The Dark Lady of the Sonnets, * Overruled, * Captain Brassbound's Conversion (Shaw); Change (Francis); * A Place in the Sun (Harcourt).

* Borrowed production.

THE LITTLE THEATRE. New York. 1912 to date. Winthrop Ames, *Director.*

Repertory: The Pigeon (Galsworthy); The Flower of the Palace of Han (from Tcheu-Yuen by Charles Rann Kennedy); The Terrible Meek (Kennedy); The Affairs of Anatol (Schnitzler); Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (from Grimms by Jesse B. White); Rutherford and Son (Sowerby); Prunella (Housman and Barker); The Philanderer (Shaw); The Truth (Fitch); A Pair of Silk Stockings (Harcourt); Hush (Violet Pearn); Pierrot the Prodigal (Wormser and Carré); The Morris Dance (Barker).

THE PLAYS AND PLAYERS' CLUB. Philadelphia. 1912 to date.

Repertory of two seasons, 1915–1917: Miss Tassey (Elizabeth Baker); The Tents of the Arabs (Dunsany); Rosalind (Barrie); The Son and Heir (Gladys Unger); The Green Coat (Musset and Augier); 'Op-o'-Me-Thumb (Fenn and Pryce); The Land of Heart's Desire (Yeats); Dolly Reforming Herself (Jones); The Bravest Thing in the World (Lee Pape); The Maker of Dreams (Down); The House Next Door (Manners); The Swan Song (Tchekhov); The Post Office (Tagore); Perspectives (Mary M. Mitchell); The Sea Shell (Fullerton L. Waldo); The Kiss (G. Paxton); Modesty (Hervieu); Masks (Blanche Dillaye); Lithuania (Brooke); Suppressed Desires (Glaspell); Babbette (E. H. Stirling); The Contrast (Royall Tyler); King Arthur's Socks (Floyd Dell); The Game (Louise Bryant); The Twelve Pound Look (Barrie); Trifles (Glaspell); Another Way Out (Langner); Happiness (Hartley Manners); Gentlemen Unafraid (Vinton Freedley); The Bracelet (Sutro); Rosalind (Barrie); Falstaff on Broadway (Wharton Stork); and eight prize plays.

THE NORTHAMPTON THEATRE. Northampton, Mass. 1917. Jessie Bonstelle and Bertram Harrison, *Directors.*

A season of their Repertory, 1916–1917: Daddy Long Legs, It Pays to Advertise, Common Clay, Rolling Stones, Under Fire, Jerry, Hawthorne of U. S. A., The Blindness of Virtue, A Full House, The Old Homestead, The Morals of Marcus, Don, Beverly's Balance, The Squaw Man, Rose of the Rancho, Polly of the Circus, Sherlock Holmes, My Lady's Dress, David Harum, Captain Jinks, Nobody's Widow, Mile-a-Minute Kendall, A Message from Mars, School for Scandal, Arms and the Girl, Shore Acres, His Majesty Bunker Bean, Milestones.

THE LITTLE THEATRE. Chicago. 1912 to date. Maurice Browne, *Director.*

Repertory: The Trojan Women, Medea (Euripides); Hedda Gabler, Rosmersholm (Ibsen); Creditors, The Stronger (Strindberg); Anatol (Schnitzler); The Happy Prince (Wilde, dramatized by Lou Wall Moore and Margaret T. Allen); The Philanderer, Mrs. Warren's Profession (Shaw); Deirdre of the Sorrows (Synge); Delphine Declines (Leonard Merrick, dramatized by Oren Taft); The Pixy, The Mothers, The Subjection of Kezia (Mrs. Havelock Ellis); The Shadowy Waters, On Baile's Strand (Yeats); Womenkind (Gibson); Joint Owners in Spain (Alice Brown); Catherine Parr (Baring); The Maker of Dreams (Down); Mr. and Mrs. P. Roe (Martyn Johnson); The Fifth Commandment (Houghton); The Constant Lover, The Charity that Began at Home (Hankin); The Lost Silk Hat (Dunsany); Jael (Florence Kiper Frank); Columbine (Arkell); The King of the Jews (Browne); Li...

uania (Brooke); the Pretty Sabine Women (Andreyev); The Grotesques (Head); The Letter, Extreme Unction, The Bachelor, The Grasshopper, Temperament (Mary Aldis); Mary Broome (Monkhouse); The Hindu Gods —Shadow Magic (Arthur and Beryl Hight); Cranford (Mrs. Gaskell, dramatized by Marguerite Merington).

THE LITTLE THEATRE. Philadelphia. 1913 to date. Mrs. Harriet Jay, *Director.*

Selection from Repertory: The Adventures of Chlora (anon.); Ghosts (Ibsen); The Court Tenor (Wedekind); Pater Noster (Coppée); French as She is Spoke (T. Bernard); The Importance of being Earnest (Wilde); Sister Beatrice (Maeterlinck); Tomorrow (MacKaye); The Pigeon (Galsworthy); His Majesty the Fool (Andrews); Tiger (Bynner); The Man in the Street (Parker); Literature (Schnitzler); Pierrot of the Minute (Dowson); Arms and the Man (Shaw); The Rivals (Sheridan); The Constant Lover (Hankin); Hindle Wakes (Houghton); The Silver Box (Galsworthy); The Critic (Sheridan); Lonesome Like (Brighouse); The Admirable Bashville, The Dark Lady of the Sonnets (Shaw); The Piper (Marks); The Servant in the House (Kennedy); Cranquebille (France); Barbara (Goodman); The Glittering Gate (Dunsany); Miles Dixon (Cannan); The Birthday (Fulda); The Miracle of St. Anthony (Maeterlinck); The Carrier Pigeon (Phillpotts); The Bear (Tchekhov); Simoom (Strindberg); In April (Rose Pastor Stokes); The Blind (Maeterlinck); The Lingerie Laureate (Lee Pape); The Emperor (Richardson); The Manœuvres of Jane (Jones); Misalliance (Shaw); What the Doctor Ordered (Thomas); The Weakest Link (Dix); At Night all Cats are Grey (Robert Garland); You Never Can Tell (Shaw); The Subjection of Kezia (Mrs. Havelock El-

lis); The Doctor's Dilemma, Candida (Shaw); A Doll's House (Ibsen).

THE 47 WORKSHOP OF HARVARD. Boston. 1913 to date. G. P. Baker, *Director*.

Repertory of original plays: Lina Amuses Herself (W. Fenimore Merrill); Educated (Marian F. Winnek); Millo Make-Believe (Eleanor Hallowell Abbott Coburn); The Call of the Mountain (Edwin Carty Ranck); Home Sweet Home (Violet Robinson); Romance of the Rose, pantomime (Sam Hume); Why the Chimes Rang (Elizabeth MacFadden); His Womenfolk (Abby Merchant); The Only Girl in Sight (Caroline H. Budd); In For Himself (Mark W. Reed); Nothing But Money (Margaret Champney); Court Favor (from Oscar Wilde by Astrid Kimball); The Waves of Torre (Ethel Claire Randall); Between the Lines (Charlotte B. Chorpenning); The Purple Dream (Donald L. Breed); The Rebound (Thomas P. Robinson); Plots and Playwrights (Edward Massey); The Return of the Prodigal (Lewis Beach); The Other Voice (Sydney Fairbanks); Prudence in Particular (Rachel Barton Butler); The Wonder Worker (Lucy Wright); The Rescue (Rita C. Smith); The Florist Shop (Winifred Hawkridge); The Glory of Their Years (J. R. Froome); Will O' The Wisp (Doris F. Halman); The Colonel's Comuppence (Catherine Clugston); Eyvind of the Hills (Johann Sigurjonnson); Rusted Stock (Doris Halman).

THE LITTLE COUNTRY THEATRE. Fargo, N. Dakota. 1914 to date. A. G. Arvold, *Director*.

The repertory covers about eighty plays of all schools of which the following are representative: A Bee in a Drone's Hive (original play by Cecil Baker); Miss Civilization (Davis); Cured (H. C. Bunner); Engaged

(Gilbert); Every Ship Will Find a Harbor (original play by Albert C. Heine); For the Cause (original play by Charles G. Carlson); Farm Home Scene in Iceland Thirty Years Ago (original, by M. Thorfinnson); Her Husband's Wife (A. E. Thomas); 'Op-o'-Me-Thumb (Fenn and Pryce); The Prairie Wolf (original play by John Lange); The Raindrops (original play by E. V. Briem and Matthias Thorfinnson); Ruth (original play by Abbie L. Simmons); The Rejuvenation of Aunt Mary (Warner); The Servant in the House (Kennedy); Sam Average (MacKaye); The Rising of the Moon, The Travelling Man (Lady Gregory); The Swan Song (Tchekhov).

Carnegie Institute of Technology, Dramatic Arts Department. Pittsburgh, Penn. 1914 to date. Thomas Wood Stevens, *Director.*

Repertory: The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It, A Winter's Tale, Richard II (Shakespeare); Iphigenia in Tauris, Hippolytus (Euripides); Poetaster (Jonson); The Elder Brother (Fletcher); Tartuffe (Molière); Pillars of Society (Ibsen); The Liars (Jones); You Never Can Tell (Shaw); The Importance of Being Earnest (Wilde); Life's a Dream (Calderon); Henri Durot (Goodman and Hecht); The Weevils (original play by Smith and Bennett); The King's Threshold, The Land of Heart's Desire (Yeats); The Chaplet of Pan (Stevens and Rice); The Second Shepherd's Play; Le medecin malgré lui (Molière); The Shadow of the Glen (Synge); The Betrayal (Colum); Dancing Dolls (Goodman); The Neighbors (Gale); The Wonder Hat (Goodman); The Tents of the Arabs (Dunsany); Glory of the Morning (Leonard); The Dead are Dead (Brighouse); Holbein in Blackfriars (Stevens and Goodman); Simoom

(Strindberg); Paolo and Francesca (Phillips); Macaire (Stevenson and Henley); Deirdre (Yeats); The Newly Married Couple (Björnson); Atalanta in Calydon (Swinburne).

THE KANSAS CITY COMEDY CLUB. Kansas City. 1914 to date. Marcus Ford, *Director.*

The repertory covers 18 plays, including: Lady Patricia (Besier); The Dear Departed (Houghton); Overtones (Gerstenberg); The Game of Chess (Goodman); The Pigeon (Galsworthy); The Gods of the Mountain (Dunsany); Sacred Ground (Giacosa); The Bear (Tchekhov); Hedda Gabler (Ibsen).

THE LITTLE THEATRE. Duluth. 1914 to date.

Repertory: The Dark Lady of the Sonnets (Shaw); The Twelve Pound Look (Barrie); The Workhouse Ward (Gregory); The Dear Departed (Houghton); How He Lied to Her Husband (Shaw); The Will (Barrie); The Maker of Dreams (Down); The Lost Silk Hat, The Glittering Gate (Dunsany); The Carrier Pigeon (Phillpotts); The Monkey's Paw (W. W. Jacobs); Milestones (Bennett and Knoblauch) and eighteen other plays, several original.

THE LITTLE THEATRE SOCIETY OF INDIANA. Indianapolis. 1915 to date.

Repertory: Polyxena (adapted from Hecuba of Euripides by S. A. Eliot, Jr.); A Killing Triangle, pantomime; The Glittering Gate (Dunsany); The Scheming Lieutenant (Sheridan); A Christmas Miracle Play (from The Pageant of the Shearmen and Taylors by S. A. Eliot, Jr.); Dad (Maxwell Parry); The Broken God (Hortense Flexner); Overtones (Gerstenberg); The Pretty Sabine Women (Andreyev); At Steinbergs; The

Game of Chess (Kenneth Sawyer Goodman); How He Lied to Her Husband (Shaw); The Dark Lady of The Sonnets (Shaw); Dawn (Percival Wilde); The Kisses of Marjorie (Booth Tarkington); Chicane (from Jack London); The Groove (Middleton); Polly of Pogue's Run (W. O. Bates); Laughing Gas (Dreiser); The Farce of Pierre Patelin; Duty (Seumas O'Brien); The Lost Silk Hat (Dunsany); The Maker of Dreams (Down); The Importance of Being Earnest (Wilde); Lithuania (Brooke); Suppressed Desires (Glaspell); Spreading the News, The Rising of the Moon (Lady Gregory); Kathleen ni Houlihan (Yeats).

THE WASHINGTON SQUARE PLAYERS. New York. 1915 to date. Edward Goodman, *Director*.

Repertory: Interior (Maeterlinck); Eugenically Speaking (Goodman); Licensed (Basil Lawrence); Another Interior; Love of One's Neighbor (Andreyev); Moondown (John Reed); My Lady's Honor (Murdock Pemberton); Two Blind Beggars and One Less Blind (Moeller); The Shepherd in the Distance, pantomime in Black and White (Holland Hudson); The Miracle of St. Anthony (Maeterlinck); In April (Rose Pastor Stokes); Forbidden Fruit (Feuillet); Saviours (Goodman); The Bear (Tchekhov); Helena's Husband (Moeller); Fire and Water (Hervey White); The Antick (MacKaye); A Night of Snows (Bracco); Literature (Schnitzler); The Honorable Lover (Bracco); Whims (Musset); Overtones (Gerstenberg); The Clod (Lewis Beach); The Road-house in Arden (Moeller); The Tenor (Wedekind); The Red Cloak, pantomime (Josephine Meyer); Children (Guy Bolton and Tom Carlton); The Age of Reason (Cecil Dorrian); The Magical City (Zoë Akins); Monsieur Pierre Patelin; Aglavaine and Selysette (Maeterlinck); The Sea Gull

(Tchekhov); A Merry Death (Evréinov); Lover's Luck (Porto-Riche); The Sugar House (Alice Brown); Sisters of Susanna (Moeller); Bushido (Takeda Izumo, translated by von Gersdorf and Hohl); Trifles (Glaspell); Another Way Out (Langner); Altruism (Ettlinger); The Death of Tintagiles (Maeterlinck); The Last Straw (Crocker); The Hero of Santa Maria (Goodman and Hecht); Impudence (Auernheimer); Plots and Playwrights (Edward Massey); * The Life of Man (Andreyev); Sganarelle (Molière); The Poor Fool (Bahr); * Ghosts (Ibsen); Pariah (Strindberg).

THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYHOUSE. New York. February 1915 to date. Alice and Irene Lewisohn, *Directors.*

Repertory: Jephthah's Daughter; Tethered Sheep (Gilbert Welsh); The Glittering Gate (Dunsany); The Maker of Dreams (Down); The Waldies (G. S. Hamlen); Wild Birds (Violet Pearn); Thanksgiving, Festival Dancers; Petrouchka, Festival Dancers; With the Current (Sholem Asch); The Price of Coal (Brighouse); The Marriage Proposal (Tchekhov); A Night at an Inn (Dunsany); The Married Woman (Fernald); Black 'Ell (Miles Malleson); A Sunny Morning (Quintero); The People (Glaspell).

Outside attractions: Ethel Barrymore in The Shadow; Ellen Terry; Robert Whittier in Ghosts; The Irish Theatre of America; Frank Lea Short; Mrs. LeMoyne; Gertrude Kingston in Captain Brassbound's Conversion; The Great Catherine, The Inca of Jerusalem; The Queen's Enemies; David Bispham in Adelaide; Mary Lawton and Walter Hampden in Macbeth, abridged; Die Freie Yiddische Volksbühne in The

* Full length play; others are in one or two acts.

Fires of St. John (Sudermann); Three Generations (Ronetti Romano); Joel (Perez Hirschbein); Sister and Brother (Mark Arnstein); For Happiness, The Quest (Stanislaw Pshitishewsky); An Enemy of the People (Ibsen); The Last One (Hirschbein); W. W. Gibson and Neighborhood Players in Womenkind and Holiday.

Children's plays: The Shadow of Shut-eye Town; Snow White; The Gift of the Fairies; The Goose Girl (dramatic version of Die Königskinder); Hiawatha; The Toy Box (Debussy).

THE BRAMHALL PLAYHOUSE. New York. 1915 to date. Butler Davenport, *Director.*

Repertory: The Lost Co-respondent, The Depths of Purity, Keeping Up Appearances, Tangled Lives, The Importance of Coming and Going, Difference in Gods (Davenport); The Courtship of Then, Now and To-morrow (Anna Wynne).

THE DETROIT LITTLE THEATRE. Detroit. 1916 to date. Sam Hume, *Director.*

Repertory: The Tents of the Arabs (Dunsany); The Bank Account (Howard Brock); The Wonder Hat (Goodman); Sham (Frank G. Tompkins); Ephraim and the Winged Bear (Goodman); The Revesby Sword Play; Abraham and Isaac; The Chinese Lantern (Housman); Helena's Husband (Moeller); Trifles (Glaspell); The Glittering Gate, The Lost Silk Hat (Dunsany); The Intruder (Maeterlinck); Lonesome Like (Brighouse).

THE WISCONSIN PLAYERS. Milwaukee. 1916 to date. Laura Sherry, *Director.*

Repertory: A Blind Wife, The Rich Poor Man (Walter Morley); The Man Who Married the Moon (Charlotte Markham); Bubbles (Anna Hempstead

Branch); A Dead Soul (Austin Simms); The Feast of the Holy Innocents (Marshall Illsley); Orange Blossom (Phillips Chynoweth); Ambition, On the Pier (Laura Sherry).

THE LITTLE PLAYHOUSE COMPANY. St. Louis. 1916 to date. C. J. Masseck, *Director.*

Repertory: Joy (Galsworthy); The Florist's Shop (Winifred Hawkbridge); Duty (Seumas O'Brien); Good News (Fred Ballard); The Playboy of the Western World (Synge); The Golden Apple (Gregory); Nero's Mother (Phillips); An Eye for an Eye (adapted from Roumanian by Oscar Leonard); Joint Owners in Spain (Alice Brown); Arduin (Cale Young Rice); In a Balcony (Browning); Ghosts (Ibsen); Don Pietro Caruso (Bracco); Her Children (Robert Hanna); The Stronger (Strindberg); Riders to the Sea (Synge); Margot (Sudermann); Reflections (Margaret Ewing).

THE VAGABOND PLAYERS. Baltimore. 1916 to date. Adele Gutman Nathan, *Producing Director.*

Repertory: The Artist (Mencken); Ryland (Stevens and Goodman); A Merry Death (Evréinov); Bound East for Cardiff (Eugene O'Neill); The Stronger (Strindberg); The Miracle of St. Anthony (Maeterlinck); Contemporaries (Wilbur Daniel Steele); The Betrayal (Colum); Suppressed Desires (Cook and Glaspell); The Double Miracle (Robert Garland); The Maker of Dreams (Down); The Song of Songs; Overruled (Shaw); The Theater of the Soul (Evréinov); Helena's Husband (Moeller).

THE PROVINCETOWN PLAYERS. New York. 1916 to date.

Repertory: Bound East for Cardiff (Eugene O'Neill); The Game (Louise Bryant); King Arthur's

Socks (Floyd Dell); Freedom (John Reed); Enemies (Neith Boyce and Hutchins Hapgood); Suppressed Desires (Cook and Glaspell); The Two Sons (Boyce); Lima Beans (Alfred Kreymborg); Before Breakfast (Eugene O'Neill); Barbarians (Rita Weilman); The Dollar (Pinski); The People (Glaspell); Cocaine (Pendleton King).

The Players' Workshop. Chicago. 1916 to date. Elizabeth Bingham, *Director.*

Repertory: Brown (Maxwell Bodenheim and William Saphier); The Home Coming, The Wonder Hat (Goodman and Hecht); Ten Minutes (Oren Taft, Jr.); Pierrot in the Clear of the Moon, pantomime (Gretchen Riggs); An Idyl of the Shops (Goodman and Hecht); A Man Can Only Do His Best, The Red Flag (Goodman); The Hero of Santa Maria (Goodman and Hecht); Dregs (Hecht); Civilization (E. Cook); Snow-White (M. L. Marsh); The War Game (Alice Gerstenberg and Rienzi de Cordova); The Magnet (Mary Corse); The Man (Oren Taft, Jr.); The Pot-Boiler (Gerstenberg); Poet's Heart (Bodenheim); The Children of To-morrow (Maude Moore-Clement); How Very Shocking (Julian Thompson); Mrs. Margaret Calhoun (Hecht and Bodenheim); Skeletons out of the Closet (Elisha Cook); You Can't Get Away From It (Frederick Bruegger); Rumor (Bruegger); Out of the Dark (Donovan Yeuell); Tonsils (Marie L. Marsh); No Sabe (E. Cook); Where But in America (Arthur Munro); Banbury Cross (Bruegger); Beyond (Gerstenberg).

The Portmanteau Theatre. New York. 1916 to date. Stuart Walker, *Director.*

Repertory: The Trimplet, Six Who Pass While the Lentils Boil, The Seven Gifts, pantomime, The Moon

Lady, pantomime, Nevertheless, The Lady of the Weeping Willow Tree (from the Japanese), The Medicine-Show, The Very Naked Boy, The Birthday of the Infanta, from Oscar Wilde (Stuart Walker); A Fan and Two Candlesticks (Mary MacMillan); Gammer Gurton's Needle (William Stevenson); Voices (Hortense Flexner); The Crier by Night (Gordon Bottomley); The Golden Doom, The Gods of the Mountain, King Argimenes and the Unknown Warrior (Dunsany).

The Brooklyn Repertory Theatre. Brooklyn. Feb., 1917, to date.

Repertory: The Maker of Dreams (Down); Poor Little Girl (Anna Wahlenberg); The Finger of God (P. Wilde); Zaragueta (Asa and Carrion); A Curious Mishap (Goldoni); Household Gods (Violet Robinson); The Subjection of Kezia (Mrs. Havelock Ellis); The Rising of the Moon (Gregory); Candida (Shaw).

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